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NEWS

miles meets nik!

A BIZARRE pair indeed – now-gregarious legend Miles Davis and often popster Nik Kershaw. Apparently Miles went backstage for a Ferner at a New York Kershaw gig and offered to blow on a couple of recuts of old Nik songs. A spokesperson assured us: "Nik is very serious about his music". We are tempted to revive an old Davis phrase – so what?



a yen for blue notes

A BIG clutch of rare Blue Notes are due in certain UK stockists this month in the form of Japanese reissues – most of which are so far not scheduled for UK release. They include Horace Silver's *Blowin' The Blues Away*, Art Taylor's *AT's Delight*, Joe Henderson's *Our Thing*, Blue Mitchell's *The Thing To Do*, Hank Mobley's *High Voltage*, Art Blakey's *Indestructible*, and Lee Morgan's *The Gigolo*.

dance to it!

A JAZZ-LATIN All-Dayer will be held at UBS (formerly Becketts Wine Bar), Snow Hill, Birmingham on 6 October. DJs Chris Reid, Rhythm Doc and Baz for Jaz will spin records from 4pm, £2 gets you in.

mistakes

A FEW gremlins from last issue: cover photo by, of course, Jeann-Marc Birraux; photo of Mbilia Bel in Livewire was taken at WOMAD by Jak Kilby.

gemini's autumn explosion

AS WE go to press, details arrive of a major jazz promotion by Gemini. Bobby McFerrin & Vocal Summit play at Logan Hall on 7 October, and Wayne Shorter brings a new band to the same venue on 24 October.

seven dials, many keyboards

A 'JAZZ piano' series of gigs takes place at Earlsam Street's Seven Dials Club this month. All gigs begin at 8:30 and the full line-up of dates is: Mark Springer & Bernard Arndt (3), Howard Riley & Keith Tippett (10), John Taylor & Pete Saberton with Steve Argüelles (17), Stan Tracey & Viran Jans (sitar) (24), Mervyn Africa/Steve Franklin & Tim Whitehead (31).

hubbard, blakey, brubeck at lewisham



Brubeck's back

A WEEK of major jazz gigs is featured at the Lewisham Jazz Festival at the end of this month. All concerts will be staged at the Lewisham Theatre and the start time for each show is 8 pm. The full line-up is as follows: Freddie Hubbard Quintet plus the Bobby Enriquez Band (28 October), Jacques Loussier (29), Alison Moyet with the John Altman Jazz Orchestra plus Bireli Lagrene (30), Dave Brubeck (31), Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (1 November), Ted Heath Reunion Concert (2).

Bookings are now being taken on 01-690 6512.

guinness brews up festival in cork

CORK FLOATS an exemplary weekend of jazz-type music over the Irish Bank Holiday Weekend (24–28 October). At more than 40 pubs, hotels and concert venues live music will be proffered by names like Alison Moyet, Art Farmer, Benny Golson, Mana Muldaur, George Melly, Louis Stewart, The Supremes (!), Bertice Reading....

More details from MGP on 0273 204101.

research undertakings

RESEARCH, THE group featuring Jim Dvorak, Django Bates, Mark Hewins, John McCullough and Geoff Searle, have three upcoming London dates: M&M Club, Munster Square (25 October), Bull & Gate, Kentish Town (30), Club Extremepore, Phed Bull, Islington (3 November). A purposeful new LP called *States Of Mind* will be the band's next record release – out soon.



Alison wonders the distance from Cork to Lewisham

bellamy's fifteen

THE IAN Bellamy Quartet undertake a 15-date tour this month. The gig sheet reads: London Bass Clef (2), Northampton Arts Centre (3), Torrington Plough Theatre (4), Bristol – venue to be announced (5), Brentwood The Monkey Club (6), Nottingham The Old Vic Tavern (9), Eype Eyesmouth Hotel (10), Aldershot West End Centre (11), Berkhamstead Civic Centre (12), Maidstone Hazlett Theatre (13), York Art Centre (16), Manchester Band On The Wall (17), Stockton Dovecot Arts Centre (18), Chesterfield Technical College (19), Derby Brownies (20).

new sounds in warrington

A NEW venue for jazz in the north-west opens its doors this month. Padgate Centre in Warrington is hosting New York Jazz on the 8th and Gary Boyle and Bob Gill on the 30th. The Centre also intends to hold workshops and a jazz society. Call John Corcoran on 0925 51144 ext. 154 for more details.



Jeff Lorber

LEADING FUSIONEER Jeff Lorber will be carling his shopful of electronic keyboards over here for two British dates at the end of October: at Nottingham Rock City (27), and London Hammersmith Odeon (28). We are told that a single from his *Step By Step* LP will be released to coincide with his presence.

at the movies!

FOR THOSE whose interest in Trad Jazz extends to the field of animation a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet veteran animator Art Babbitt is available on October 10th when he will be talking at the NFT at 6.15 pm.

Babbitt is one of the few surviving animators who worked in the studios during the era of the Jazz cartoon, having started his career with Terrytoons working under the musical supervision of Philip Scheib before moving to Disney in 1932 where he became character-animator for Goopy and worked on such Jazz and Boogie extravaganzas as *The Whoopee Party* and *Moving Day*. (Charles Garvie)

ANOTHER TREAT at the NFT comes up on 31 October with a programme of "Jazz Treasures From The National Film Archive". David Meeker has organised two hours of rare and in some cases previously unseen footage covering 30-odd years - from the 1936 *Everything Is Rhythm* with Harry Roy's band to a very rare Czech film of Louis Armstrong's visit to Prague in 1965 - full of rather moving shots of a tired old entertainer of great dignity and warmth. The 1950 Universal short *Salute To Duke Ellington* has a maestro introducing a programme of rather unusual material like "Violet Blue" and a somewhat bowdlerised "history of jazz"; and there is gorgeous footage of Billie Holiday singing two numbers with Count Basie's Sextet in the same year. Plus Benny Goodman, Buddy Rich as a young tyke, Grapelly and Shearing together in 1949, Chico Hamilton and Anita O'Day... (Richard Cook) (The NFT box office is 437 4355).



Woody Shaw

"THE TRUE fan will be able to find live music at almost every club, bar and concert venue in the city" - such is the boast claimed on behalf of this year's Berlin Jazz Festival, running from 30 October-3 November.

Some of the names promised so far for this year include Albert Mangelsdorff, Cecil Payne, Tom Waits, Woody Shaw, Tony Oxley, Sarah Vaughn, Billy Cobham, Arto Lindsay's Ambitious Lovers, Freddie Hubbard and our own Anne Whitehead.

MGP are offering a package tour to the Festival - phone them on 0273 204101 for more information.



Duke at the NFT

berlin: jazz to sweep this side of the wall

club dates

LEEDS TRADES CLUB: New York Jazz (1 October), Lowell Fulson (24)
LEEDS CIVIC THEATRE: Vienna Art Orchestra (21).
BIRMINGHAM STRATHALLAN HOTEL: Mundell Lowe (20), George Lee's Anansi (27).
BIRMINGHAM TRIANGLE ARTS CENTRE: Vienna Art Orchestra (17).
MANCHESTER BAND ON THE WALL: New York Jazz (3), Ian Bellamy Quartet (17), Pat Crumley Sextet (24), Legends (31).
GRAPES INN, TRIPPET LANE SHEFFIELD: Bugger All Stars (20), Bass Tone Trap (27).
ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL: Los Jalvas (25) (We understand this music a 'Inca jazz-rock')
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL: New Orleans Mardi Gras (7).
BARBICAN CENTRE: Alan Elsdon (6), Eddie Robins Trio (13), John Williams Octet (20), Slipstream (27) (These are lunchtime sessions).
NEWCASTLE HEATON CORNER HOUSE: John James Trio (8), Lowell Fulson (28).
UPSTAIRS AT HARRY'S, APPROACH TAVERN E2: Art Hammer Duo (2), That Uncertain Feeling (5), Mandate (16), Julie Doyle's In Your Own Time (23), Gail Thompson's Lump Sum (30).
NOTTINGHAM OLD VIC TAVERN: Siger Band (23).
LEEDS TERMITE CLUB: Siger Band (25).
HULL POSTERN GATE GALLERY: Siger Band (24).



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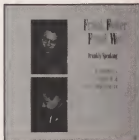
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BACK TO THE ABSOLUTE BEGINNING

After Live-Aid — and long, long after The Stars' Campaign For Inter-Racial Friendship — BRIAN MORTON looks at what happens when musicians try to 'do something'.

CYNICISM ABOUT Live Aid has by now dropped below commonplace into the deeper tide of post-euphoric inertia. Aside from its (undoubted) material achievements, Bob Geldof's project survives in the wider consciousness only as a 'moment' and a pile of home-taped videos.

Some of the specific cynicism was, of course, amply justified: half-eaten steaks swept into dustbins backstage, stalled careers kickedstart, no black musicians onstage (Miles Davis offered the French daily *Libération* the lowdown on that). Beyond these, though, the whole affair again posed the recurrent question of the relationship between music — or any popular art — and politics. 'Causes', notoriously, are not political and have more to do with style. Style quickly becomes a surrogate for political activity and, by extension, politics in the knocked-down sense becomes a branch of aesthetics.

At the moment, Britain's most visibly politicised pop band calls itself *The Style Council*; the lyrics are committed and liberal but the stance is ironic and detached. It harks back, quite consciously, to an earlier time. It's no coincidence that the nostalgia compass-needle should have settled on the late 1950s, the period that best presages our present; a society more policed than at any time since the mid-19th century (even the hungry Thirties kicked up fewer social paradoxes) between rich and poor, black and white, the haves and have-nots.

Not having, then as now, meant more than just spending power, but also the lack of social purchase. Beyond the simple sociological indices of fidges and cars there was the sense of belonging or failing to belong and with it a kind of sclerosis of political judgement. Alienation and anomie came with the National Health orange juice (and some liked to say that they had been put in there on purpose); existentialism was the fashionable philosophy; the two Colins, Wilson and MacInnes, were the writers to mention.

There is a revival of interest in MacInnes's work. His novels and essays are being reprinted — many extracts from them in Tony Gould's informal biography *Absolute MacInnes*, a follow-up to his full-length study *Inside Outsider* — and next year should see the release of a (pop) star-studded adaptation of MacInnes's novel *Absolute Beginners*, the text *Style Council* Paul Weller cites as a major source of inspiration.

MacInnes helped create a public sense of the 'underclass' of whores, ponces, pushers and hangers-on. Like Norman Mailer in the USA, he developed a quasi-existentialist (though far more liberal) and anarchistic philosophy based on 'instinctual' types such as blacks and criminals. He also traced the take-over of pop (with its heavy edge of populism) from the older and more obviously elitist jazz. The lads who mobbed Tommy Steele or any of Britain's Presley clones were being drawn into an imported 'spectacle' — 'Young England, Halt English' MacInnes called the phenomenon in a celebrated essay

— that offered excitement and compensation for the sense of not belonging.

MacInnes's never-named *Absolute Beginner* moves through London, real events and fictionalised situations, with a 'cool' and detachment some critics have traced back to Charles Baudelaire's *Dandy*, who confronts the city with a heroic disengagement. At the heart of the book is his account of one very real set of events, the Notting Dale — not actually Notting Hill — racial disturbances of 1958. The most notorious of these happened on September 1 when a Nigerian student, down in London from Derby, was chased by a white gang and besieged in a greengrocer's shop while the buyers, an elderly couple, held the attackers at bay till the police arrived.

The *Absolute Beginner* describes the event with his customary reserve. 'Then came another incident — and soon, as you'll understand, I began to lose count a little, and, as time went on, lose count a bit of what time was, as well.' It is that sense of time, ironically, that sets the difference between the observer and the African youth, clad in a drab suit 'to show the English people that we mustn't think they're savages in grass skirts and bones stuck in their hair but twentieth-century numbers just like we are. I think he was an African; anyway, there's no doubt that's where his ancestors all came from — millions of them, for centuries way back in time.'

In the end the *Absolute Beginner* shows



"The voices of men shouting 'We do not like this' must not be misunderstood for the cry of 'This cannot last' let alone for the slogan 'This must be revolutionised'."

himself willing and able to take action of a sort, spontaneous, instinctive, unthought-out. MacInnes, too, was unwilling just to stand and watch. He became an active member of the Stars' Campaign for Interracial Friendship, a group set up in the wake of the riots and including John Dankworth and Cleo Laine, Ken Colyer, Chris Barber, Humphrey Lyttelton, Max Jones and 'Francis Newton', the jazz-reviewing pseudonym of Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm. Lane and Dankworth were deeply and perhaps inevitably interested in racial prejudice; they joined Trevor Huddleston's South African boycott and contributed to the Christian Action treason trial fund.

MacInnes threw himself into the cause with enthusiasm. He distributed leaflets and canvassed round the West London estates and later claimed he had helped avert further riots. In the event, SCIF achieved little of a concrete nature. The group held a much publicised interracial kids' party, but little else of moment emerged. Good intentions tell victim to associated evils: the deep-seatedness of racist feeling and the ineffectiveness of protest.

Protest is all too quickly drawn back into the overall social spectacle. In particular, protest expressed via artistic means is almost always domesticated and familiarised; what sets out as a political gesture is all too often received as a purely aesthetic expression; at Live-Aid, a Canadian film of dying and starving children was shown over *The Cars* 'Drive'; the music softened the horror, the images lent the song a resonance it does not have. As 'Francis Newton' pointed out in his section on jazz and protest: 'Jazz [we might say any music] by itself is not politically conscious or revolutionary'; popular musics tend to be the creation of people who have 'no regular outlet' least of all a political one, 'for unhappiness other than the making and experiencing of aesthetic expressions'. Twenty years after writing *The Jazz Scene*, Hobsbawm was still sceptical; he saw the jazz world as a 'neutral zone, one of those peculiar little islands where one can take a holiday from society'.

If the 'jazz world' comprises both music and musicians then perhaps some separation of the two is required. Yet if all music tends to degenerate very rapidly into style, losing whatever polemical or subversive edge it may have had (and in the process making perception of its targets that bit harder), can musicians be expected to detach themselves sufficiently from what they do in order to make inroads into power or repression? The lessons of SCIF in the 1950s and Band Aid in the latter 1980s are still not clear but they suggest more than strongly that music, given that its production and dissemination are so strongly bound up in existing social and economic relationships, is unlikely ever to push the stone more than a penous inch or two uphill; and that its practitioners, bound as they are to the same system and to aesthetic communication, are no better placed. ●

NEW YORK EAR AND EYE



**More stirrings
from the city that
never sleeps . . .**

**PETER PULLMAN
reports.**

ON JANUARY 26, 1934, the Apollo Theatre, formerly Hustig and Seaman's Burlesque House, opened with *Jazz à la Carte*: Aida Ward, Sixteen Gorgeous Hot Steppers, Benny Carter and his Orchestra, and a young showman named Ralph Cooper.

For the next forty years the Apollo presented live entertainment, including everyone from Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Charlie Parker to Coles & Atkins, Bojangles and Pigmeat (from Billie Holiday to Sammy Davis to Jackie Wilson to Michael Jackson, vocally speaking). Every known black entertainer either made his/her name there, or had to prove the name was for real. Each week's attraction did sixteen shows (the pressure was too great for Johnny Mathis and Marvin Gaye, both cancelled out of fear). The Apollo audience had a Promethean reputation; not where the artist steals thunder, but where he/she might be devoured.

The Apollo maintained its uptown supremacy all those years because of certain constants: those hard-nosed crowds (actually anxious to be won over), the location on 125th Street (the backbone of Harlem), and Amateur Nights, presided over every Wednesday by the same "young showman", Ralph Cooper. It only lost its grip on the community when artists started reaping greater profits from their LP sales, and found downtown venues open to them for their less frequent "live" gigs.

By 1976 the Apollo was in the hands of the receivers. Presently run by a consortium of business men and former politicians, the Apollo has video facilities for cable television arrangements, and plans satellite broadcasts to European cities.

And last year, amidst all this growth and development in new directions, the Apollo brought back two traditions that had premiered fifty years earlier: the Wednesday Amateur Nights and Ralph Cooper, master of ceremonies.

For a young performer, the Apollo still means everything. For the crowds, the Apollo is a home, a cosy place where they go for a good time; it matters not who's on the programme. Being able to say, "I went to the Apollo," conveys status on the speaker. While the performer knows, "If I can make it at the Apollo, I can make it anywhere."

There was a succession of twenty-six acts this Wednesday, presented rapid-fire without intermission to a packed house. When the crowd starts to boo and hiss, the Apollo siren blares, lights start flashing, and the performer's hopes are roundly (and rudely) quashed. Sandiman Sims, the oldtime hooper, is now in charge of "escorting" the losers offstage: in clown costume and top hat, he shoots cap pistols and waddles about, slowly encoirring his victim. Usually the performer accepts the judgment gracefully.

But how the crowd loves a winner. They roar, give standing ovations, and might call you back for an encore. They recognise their

duty to bring forth, adjuice, and despatch the contestants. Because the Apollo is a community theatre, the fans are very protective and proud; when someone "has it" the crowd responds - this is one of their own on that stage.

There were thirteen solo singing acts; mostly in the soul vein, but some with heavy Gospel influence. Three instrumental groups performed, including an awful zonked-out reggae band using clouds of smoke for an 'effect'. A solo trumpeter played to a poor recording of Ella Fitzgerald's "Misty"; a Gospel group, presumably from one family, sported matching tuxedos, down to the youngest member, a two-year-old, a ventriloquist had a disco-booging dummy, and there was a comedy-karate team where Darth Vader seemed to meet Ramses II. Some of the singing groups were quite promising, and two different dance acts by teenagers were refreshing, as modern dance seemed to overshadow any disco moves. And we were spared any break-dancers.

The evening is amateurism in its truest sense: a jittery attempt by a young hopeful, full of guts and verve, and too long by half. There were some great voices in the groups. A soloist here and there had great poise. And if many held the microphone a little too long, and a little too close, it comes with the territory: they all want to "soak up" that moment, with the spotlight on them.

The women soloists ruled, showing an uncanny understanding of love in their songs, considering their tender ages. One woman wailed "Can We Talk It Over?"; but the chorus from the house shouted "No!", unfortunately. Another stumbled a bit on a lyric, sent the audience's displeasure, and went to pieces, crying as she went offstage amid boos. The emcee, sensing that some justice needed to be served, asked the crowd if they'd take her back. They did, and she fought off the tears to sing very capably. But the winner, a singer who demonstrated more poise and talent than any two acts combined, was Mune Fowler. She had her wails and whoas under control, and brought this obdurate assembly to its feet, roaring. She took first prize in the judging (by acclamation).

Once again, one of Harlem's own had made them happy.

BERT WILLIAMS was the first great black entertainer in America. A consummate showman, he moved from minstrel show to the Ziegfeld Follies (and a salary of 2500 dollars per week). WEB DuBois said Williams "did more for our race than I have". He was an intellectual from the West Indies who denied race problems in this country (in the early 1900s), yet wore blackface in every performance until his death in 1922. He caused the all-white cast of the Follies to storm off in protest when he was signed; but months later they were begging to work with him when his solo act packed the house. He had a special postman deliver his mail, and when told by an irate bartender that, for a 'coloured', a drink would cost fifty dollars, he plucked a \$500 bill from his wallet and said, "I'll take ten."

Star of *The Morning*, an ambitious play with music, recently had a short Off-Broadway run. Written by Loffen Mitchell, who had an earlier

Broadway success with *Bubbling Brown Sugar*, the play concerns the early years of Williams' strange career. The crux of the material deals with the comedian's pride, and how it takes a beating in order for him to "break the colour-line": he was the first black to perform onstage with whites.

Early in the play Williams meets his future partner, George Walker, also skilled in minstrel shows. At the drop of a hat they do soft shoes, ham bone, sing ballads, etc.; and the life-in-a-trunk-with-an-occasional-meal unfolds in episodic style. By the turn of the century the team is touring with a new kind of revue - too structured to be vaudeville, but with plenty of songs in the book. And the rhythmic music needed to fuel these entertainments? Ragtime.

By 1908 Walker and Williams were 'hot' - following on the success of pioneers Will Marion Cook and J. Rosamond Johnson - and had huge successes with this new kind of show. *Sons of Ham* (1899), *In Abyssinia* (1906), etc were clearly precursors of the first wave of musicals of the Twenties, by the likes of Andy Razaf and Eubie Blake.

Walker took ill, and Williams was offered the chance to join the Ziegfeld Follies, although he already had envisioned a black theatre where "the travelling Negro dramatic company will come to town as often as the Negro musical company". But the reality was the demand that he wear blackface onstage.

The strongest part of *Star of the Morning* is this dilemma, as the proud, learned West Indian must become 'darker' to be 'seen': "I wouldn't do blackface. Nothing could have induced me to. So I worked straight and made eight dollars a week. This wasn't conducive to clean linen. So I went to work using black cork. I got fifty dollars a week then."

The climax of the first act shows Williams, very capably played by Tim Simonson, appearing onstage with the burnt cork for the first time. The once patrician West Indian is now a bug-eyed, shuffling, blubbering black man with his "dis heah" and "dat dere" speech. In the sketch, as white-gloved, curled fingers peek around the curtain, Williams plays Nobody - a poor nothin', without a name, just a nobody. He stands, quivering, as a judge is about to sentence him for stealing a vase. His cheeks puff, the tears welling, he sings:

"When I was in that train wreck,
And I'd thought I cashed my last check -
Who took the en-gines from offa my neck?"

No-body?

It is a doubly pathetic and painful moment: Bert Williams could never respect nobody who'd do that to his face.

Unfortunately the rest of the play doesn't match this scene. But the puzzling fact of "the funniest man I saw onstage, the saddest I knew offstage", as WC Fields said, are evident. Early in the play this comic genius says, in earnest, "I hate people who laugh at others." He spent so much time playing the black whites wanted, it's hard to know if his artistry came through the mask, whether it shielded or smothered his sophisticated, ironic comedy. Nobody knows.

vice-versa), and the upshot of "We Are The World", at our end, is a new awareness: marimbas can be distinguished from mbiras, high-life from ju-ju, etc. There's even a summer retreat in the mountains where New Yorkers can take African dance workshops.

But nuzzling alongside the Radio Occora imports are the big studio hybrid recordings, and with the courses in ethnomusicology at the local polytechnics is the promotion of hyphenated musics neither here nor there African rhythms are present at these gigs, but 'jazzed-up' with Americanised vocals or instrumentation.

The Alternative Museum, the New York venue most seriously committed to World Music (an informal United Nations of Sungs), recently fell into this trap. The Talking Drums, diverse West African drummers and dancers, performed at the museum's concert space, outfitting themselves with traditional clothing but adding saxophones, electric guitars, et al. The back-up big band comprising young Americans played thin, college orchestra material, while warm, sensuous dancers tried to reach out across the expansive stage. A section where variously-pitched cow bells rung was beautiful, only to be 'improved' by the addition of a rock beat. The talking drums had so much to say: why didn't they let them speak?

Another African-American offering, "A Song for Soweto", was a sprawling, six-hour benefit for the Bishop Tutu Scholarship Fund, which helps South Africans studying abroad. Held on 16 June, an emotionally-charged day for all South Africans, the concert tapped many nerves in the overwhelmingly black audience. The great historical figures of Black America as well as Africa were cited, as parallel struggles were celebrated. Amin Beraka dazzled as he twisted end writhed his poem about America during Reconstruction (from a longer work, *Why's*), a poetic history of blacks in America). Similarly, Abiodun Oyewole (of the original Last Poets) electrified us with a scorching rap poem about a young junkie, "Have You Seen The Little Boy (Chasing The White Ghost)". And the multi-talented Ndlovu did an African dance-with-song tribute to Garvey, Nkrumah, Biko, Malcolm, etc. All the emotions were in the place, the cause was a good one; but the music...

We had to settle for something neither African nor American. Oliver Lake, Jay Hoggard and Rene McLean, all talented artists in their own right, presented lively groups that tended to smooth over the jagged, expressive qualities of their leaders. Not one of these bands moved in a specific direction, but tried to create a general, warm atmosphere in solidarity with the cause. The presence of Hotep Gaieta (pianist) and Ms Tandeka (vocalist) both talented musicians from South Africa, only further leavened the mélange.

Even an apparently all-African ensemble, Kimati Dinizulu, seemed disingenuous. Pleasant tinkering on indigenous instruments that was so Pan-African, so pan-everything that nothing panned out. Which leaves these musics in some sort of continental drift. Now that they know they are the world, will the promoters let the world speak, and New York listen? ●

Picture: The Apollo in the thirties

AFRICA IS moving closer to New York (or

LIVEWIRE

■ARTURO SANDOVAL Tucson, Ronnie Scott's

THERE IS rather less 'Latin' in Arturo's group than I had expected – phylistine ideas of yamba percussion, maracas and the rest, that is. In fact Sandoval's band play a contagiously exuberant stew of bop atmospheres and perky dance-based improvisations that require no great listening credentials – in either Cuban or hard bop departments.

Sandoval is a bumptious, far too generous player: when he uncorks himself, the music floods from his trumpet, and it includes a mass of superfluous decoration. He plays as if his heart wants to burst, like his great mentor Dizzy Gillespie, but he could usefully edit some of the conversation. That, though, would take too much of the spirit out of a wonderfully spirited approach. In a little interlude for the rest of the band, he plays piano and sounds like an even more fond *Tete Montoliu*.

His group rip through their material with the grace endemic to those with sweet hands. Only one percussionist sits beside the regular trap drummer, and they bubble steadily in the background rather than attempting the all-out assault of polyrhythm one might anticipate. When Sandoval himself joins in on congas, there is a brief pass-round-the-rhythm passage which I could have stood a lot more of – a leap out of their normal bounds.

Besides the leader's buzzing horn, his guitarist takes most of the other solos and shows a smart ear for how rock licks and jazz inflections can be smeared together. When they play "A Night in Tunisia" all the brooding and mystery of that tune gets traded for a bounce tempo that almost skitters. Maybe that's the truest rendering of the locale under discussion.

Richard Cook

■JAMAALADEEN TACUMA & JAMAAL Munich, Alabama-Haile

IMPRESSIVE LAST year on a German tour as second lieutenant with Ornette Coleman's Prime Time, bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma was doubtly so with his all-Philadelphia quintet, Jamaal. In common with his friend and occasional co-conspirator Bill Laswell, Tacuma is trying to gnaw away at the petty category divisions that separate jazz from dance music, funk from rock, and ethnic music from free improvisation. This is a full time job, but Tacuma never tries to force all this music down the same funnel at the same time, and his success ratio is correspondingly higher than that of other polyglotters.

Simplifying, his endeavours span three main groups. His work with Prime Time and with the commercial (but subversively so) group Cosmic represent the poles. Jamaal is the middle ground. Inevitably, there is bleeding and leakage to and from the other units but Jamaal is set up to attack a sit-down jazz-rock concert audience. Nobody told us beforehand in Munich, so we danced. Drawing on material from the *Showstopper* and *Renaissance* Man albums, the group ran the gauntlet of Tacuma's complex themes with remarkable grace. So much so that the recorded versions of the numbers seemed brittle by comparison. Formative influences

may have included the Mahavishnu Orchestra and King Crimson but neither of those groups ever attained the fluency that Jamaal already exhibits.

Virtuoso technique is the basis of the way Tacuma and his terrific drummer Cornell Rochester play, a tool towards an end, not mere display case stuff. Ron Howerton has to be one of the hippest conga drummers around, supercharging the soloists, holding down an impeccable counterpoint to Rochester's wild and breathtaking outbursts. Saxophonist James Watkins sounds rooted about equally in Dolphy and Ayler but one wants to hear more to take the measure of his own voice. Guitarist Rick Iannoccone, working at a technical disadvantage (a lack of the appropriate transformer meant that he could use none of his many looped pedals) sounded like no other guitarist I've heard. He works with clouds of sound but not in a pasty/pretty Metheny/Bill Fissell manner. His clouds shift at a faster clip, are darker, and threaten imminent storm.

But Tacuma takes most of the spotlight, playing endlessly inventive lead lines on his Steinberger bass and anchoring them against the rib-bruising force-field of his lower-register thumps. Most of the time he sounds like two players, never neglecting the bottom line authority of traditional bass values even when airing out of some daring exploration of solo possibilities. But you knew that already, huh?

Steve Lake

■JAN GARBAREK London, Logan Hall

GARBAREK'S MUSIC is about the most satisfyingly stern and inclement show of imagination Scandinavia has offered to jazz; but, exasperatingly, he can't seem to find the right setting for his austerity. On record, the saxophonist is settling into the ECM chamber routine. This solemn concert suggested the same disappointing contentment.

In the environs of a quartet, Garbarek makes no attempt to dominate the sound. He seemed actually to play less than anyone else. Eberhard Weber's once unique electric bass sound seems to be passing into popular currency, and his ideas have grown conventional of late. David Torn plays synthesised guitar that is all picturesque ripple. Michael Di Pasqua tinkers politely around the drums. It is all embroidery, a quite fruitless response to the saxophonist's insistence on elementals. As he plays more and more spangly, trying to get that weegeegee soprano shriek exactly right, so the others tattle with mundane eloquence.

The problem was clear right at the start in "Skygger". On *Dis* (probably his most riveting record) Garbarek scored the theme against the grim pathos of a full brass section. In place of that grippingly tragic music, we heard a diffuse variation that made light of his earlier achievement. That dispersal of tension and creative weight continued through to the encore, a rather clumsy reading of "Witch-Tai-To".

Given that Garbarek embarked on a lonelier and far more absorbing path to start with, it seems irksome to find him settling for the dull restrictions this touring group set. Maybe the only way to hear him is on the prow of some

stormy fjord, with just the North Sea breeze for accompaniment. I'd be there.

Richard Cook

■ELLA FITZGERALD London RFH

FOR THE last six months I have been involved in a project which has moved from being a fascinating challenge to a minefield of frustration: researching the life of Ella Fitzgerald for a biography by Sid Colin (to be published 1986). Approaching the final chapter, we were suddenly presented with a possible Big Break – Ella's RFH concert and maybe even an interview. High Hopes indeed!

Backstage in the interval, Ella's long-term manager Norman Granz showed us only his cold shoulder. If I'd been an insensitive paparazzi, I would have broached Ella's unguarded dressing room and interrupted her conversation with a friend about her gold shoes... instead, I settled back with 3000 others and surrendered to her shy charms as a performer and her still strong presence as a singer.

Ella has been rather inelegantly categorised as one of the old "warhorses of jazz" – that group of ageing legends who carry to the world's concert platforms and mainly white audiences a version of their race's musical history. For ten months of each year, Ella inhabits hotel suites and concert halls, performing to a largely uncritical, adoring audience, many of whose parents weren't even born when she first stepped on stage at the Apollo Theatre to sing with Chick Webb's band. But to my delight and surprise, this was no patronising support for a has-been: Ella worked that show.

Leading her trio (piano, bass, drums and, later, Joe Pass's guitar), she confidently led through a programme which has undoubtedly changed little in years – apart from the improvised scatting around which her reputation is pivoted. She carried the show with an infectious enthusiasm that I wouldn't have thought possible for someone known to be so shy. I wondered why she still performs: money must have long ceased to be an incentive. Her lameness and failing eyesight must make the trips quite a strain. But watching her nervousness drift away, her hands settle during the first song, and her hips and feet move into an easy accompaniment of the beat, was like watching a delicate flower come slowly into bloom.

By the end of "Take The A Train", which launched the show, her voice had lost its quavering edge. Ella looked great, sleek in a sheath of coffee lace, and stunningly youthful. Of course her voice is declining with age (it's more obvious in her speech than in singing), but she has clearly examined the restrictions age is placing on her vocal chords and worked out how to get the most out of what remains. Her range is still good, it wobbly round the edges, but age hasn't robbed her of an enviable, crystalline precision. She's cut down on those tingling, sustained notes which illuminated her ballads, because they just don't sustain no more, and concentrates more on the brief, angular scats which are partly the basis of her reputation anyway.

In the first number, she inserted a scattered reference to her own songbook; and soon

after, in an untitled Dizzy Gillespie duet with the bass player, featured a stunning tongue-twister which contained a teased one-line reference to her first hit song, "A basket-a-tasket": "And that's all you get". Her version of "Boy from Ipanema" (Miss Fitzgerald is far too correct for any of that gender bending) and her "One Note Samba" (in duet with Joe Pass) revealed how well her tone is suited to the creamy textures of the samba.

The night's surprise guest was Joe Pass, who unannounced gave four or five solos. Pass is one of those guitarists (like Metheny, Ritenour and the fusion brigade behind him) who has spent so much time on technique that his soul is on ice. His music relies on flow and density, a single space leaves you gasping for the next note, rather than enjoying the silence. It was a relief when Ella returned, gorgeous in an orange dress, for a duet with Joe. This was a high point of the evening: two old pals, standing close facing each other, trading their lines, testing and challenging each other, and drawing on their combined knowledge of a million lines. In their final song, "One Note Samba", when Ella eventually out-phrased Joe, both dissolved into giggles.

As the bouquets were laid on the platform Ella was urged into her third encore - "Miss Otis Regrets". Closing the Cole Porter songbook, she was helped off stage back into her private world, taking with her the answers to my nagging questions about her life, her tastes, her opinions... I went home wiser about the woman, more intrigued than ever about her legend, but grateful for having seen first-hand how her reputation has been founded.

Sue Steward

■SEGUN ADEWALE & HIS SUPERSTARS INTERNATIONAL London, The Forum.

JUJU STILL seems the most 'African' of Africa's pop styles. With a sound that's evolved out of the pock and thunderous crackle of the talking drum orchestras of Nigeria, its rapprochement with pastoral melody and the twinkling web of guitars has seemed on sufferance only, of late, and Adewale's new sound strongly underlines this development, with an aggressive ctybeat that's probably intended to snatch back the Fuji audience (Fuji is a traditionalist variant of Juju that concentrates on drums in the old style), without estranging the nightclub punters, who like (reasonably enough) to consider themselves modern and authentically African.

Adewale calls his Juju YoPop (Youth Popular Music) and he's pared the earlier glibness from his songs and redoubled the drumfire, moving the guitar web back to a more or less percussive role. He sings himself, in a tight whine, or else as a part of a four-part block of harmony, that seems to work as little more than breathing space in the tense roar and stutter of the sound... there were long passages where the talking drums carried all the melody there was.

The sound was appalling, breaking up under the strain of the 13-piece, and all analysis has to acknowledge this: certainly the rhythmic subtlety apparent on record was lost, though the excitement was undimmed. The



DAVID HEFFEN

Ella and her microphone



Gerberck feels a North Sea Breeze

Africa that Miles Davis invented for *On The Corner* is beginning to appear independently, it seems; with less emphasis, to be sure, on that work's howling, primitive desolation, but a sharp and original dose of what West African drum history has to offer the future now.

Mark Sinker

■ LINDSAY COOPER'S MUSIC FOR FILMS Bloomsbury Theatre: 26 July

"THREE WEEKS of new music" with a strong and commendable presence of women: that was this year's Bloomsbury Festival. One woman, the composer, pianist and reeds player Lindsay Cooper, capped up three times – with David Thomas, Kate Westbrook and, most intriguing, least reviewed, leading a group to play her own "Music for Films".

Lindsay Cooper is something of an enigma here: a rare female presence in the sizeable avant garde underground of improvisers-cum-writers. Her popularity is greater in Europe and the US than at home, where she's a cult feminist heroine who is rarely seen but often heard through her recent foray into tv soundtrack writing. Lindsay comes home to rest, to play the occasional gig, and to compose and record. This concert was a live showcase of her music, played by new and old colleagues: ex-Henry Cows George Born and Chris Cutler, fellow Westbrook bandspies George and Phil Minton, ex-Ramcoat Vicki Aspinall, and her cinematic collaborator Sally Potter, back in her pre-directional role as a singer.

The show began on the bleak Icelandic set of *Gold Diggers*, wryly introduced as "that hit film", switched to Sally's short *Thriller* and the documentary *Rags* about 18th century women in the ragtrade, and ended with a tv soundtrack in anti-nuclear land.

Soundtracks are very particular musics, tied to action and mood, requiring particular sensitivity and skills. Ten years of improvisation and song-writing have left Lindsay with an easy talent for conjuring ambience, landscapes and scenarios. The music works on record, away from the supporting visual imagery. Live, it requires an extra dimension to animate the themes. This was partly provided by the vocal focus of Sally Potter, who was clearly drawing on her background in performance art. Her performance was fascinating to watch: on off-the-shoulder black cocktail dress became a prop, used to switch associations from formal concert hall and stern, cold, dispassionate, hard, or angry tones ("Seeing Red", "Drastic Measures") to blowsy, hard Lotte-Lénya style vampishness elsewhere. The amusing duet of "Thread The Needle" sung and acted in duet with "milk girl" George Born, was different again. Phil Minton, in more orthodox voice than his disturbing guttural, visceral explorations of her earlier solo set, combed his repertoire for appropriate qualities, and teamed with Sally or went alone – from oldie English folk to rich Welsh tenor earnestness.

Musically the show didn't spark on maybe all possible leads. Perhaps the deadened audience really were off-putting, as the band complained afterwards. But the show had plenty of thought-provoking and exciting moments. Having not seen Lindsay perform her own music for some time, I was struck by

the still strong presence of Henry Cow in her compositions – seemingly more apparent here maybe than on record. The recurrent, frenetic ensemble sections, fast mood changes, Chris Cutler's nebulous drumming and Lindsay's distinctively mournful oboe and bassoon sound, the fondness for wah-wah pedals and sustained notes and the frequent abrupt endings – all recalled 70s repertoires. Lindsay has obviously gone beyond that, too. Her twin love of European folk music and modern composed music made for fleeting associations with The Strawbs (!) during "General Strike"; and elsewhere, Lindsay's lively piano and Georgie's manic cello gave some tunes the discernible scent of a pre-War Berlin salon, with the likes of Brecht and Weill lurking in a corner.

Lindsay's talents as a composer and performer are not in doubt; they are just not well enough known yet. Her originality is just beginning to emerge: she still has to shrug off that dominating ghost of H. Cow, which has the tendency to slip back into her compositions too often. But in my favourite of her film tunes, "Iceland" (from *Gold Diggers*), she is her own mistress. Its quirky drawingroom piano melody offers a steady, reliable background to sparse guitar notes which periodically and perfectly evoke those infinite, icy vistas. Live, on record, or on the screen, this is powerful music.

Sue Steward

■ ALMEIDA FESTIVAL: BRAXTON, RZEWSKI, POPPY..... London Almeida Theatre

WITH JAZZ-RELATED musics it seems somehow curious to encounter the music of a particular musician who has always been intimately involved in its performance – either in concert or on record – divorced from that context; that is, presented by a third party, in this case Music Projects/London, without the composer's physical involvement (interestingly, it is the converse that is true of 'classical' music). In jazz the force of the musician's individual instrumental facility is inextricably bound up with the compositional shaping of his improvisation. In the absence of that level of direct intervention, the performance becomes a litmus test of the strength of a musician's formal compositional capabilities.

In this sense Anthony Braxton's composition, the centrepiece of the "Cross-town Jazz" evening, passed that test. Music Project's interpretation of the score – in which conventional notation and Braxton's system of ideograms run parallel – bore the imprint typical of his work. Consequently the high-wire control of texture and content, the taut instrumental configurations and economical use of resources characteristic of his own performances, were to be found at the heart of this reading.

As if to underscore the scope of the festival, Braxton's composition was in stark contrast to the concert given the previous evening devoted to the music of Frederic Rzewski. This indicated the driving, direct force of his work, the rapport established with his material and communicated to his listener. Much of this is conveyed through the forward rhythmic momentum of his writing, a facet particularly in evidence in his piano works ("A Machine", "Squares" and the exceptional "Wimboros

Cotton Mill Blues" – performed by Rzewski and Yvar Mikashoff – proved to be particularly telling examples) which picks up the listener and carries him with helter-skelter clarity of purpose. Expanded instrumental resources found him employing a broader textural range, but did not diminish the impact of his music, as an utterly compelling vocal performance by Francoise Walot in "Ode To The Invincible Persian Army" bore witness. His music was at once forceful, questioning and, in a sense, celebratory.

Like Rzewski, Michael Nyman's compositional roots are to be found in process music, but his characteristic drive has been directed to different ends. A late night concert of his music (scheduled also to include a new Andrew Poppy work which did not materialise) made great demands on violinists Elisabeth Perry and Alexander Balanescu, performing together as One Plus One. They appeared effortlessly to thread together the dense rhythmic and melodic lines of his composition "2 Violins" into a rich musical pageant; a manoeuvre repeated when they were joined by Nyman at the harpsichord for the denser, more volatile "Child's Play", to include a satisfying, rich concert.

For their part, Electric Phoenix both frustrated and delighted in a concert demonstrating both the strengths and weaknesses of the current voices-and-electronics line-up. The quartet are capable of calling up a remarkable range of extended voice techniques and combining them with electronics to add further to their range and colour. This they did to astonishing effect on Trevor Wishart's "Vox I & II" where their particular resources were richly explored. It was a welcome conclusion to a somewhat lacklustre concert in which Barry Guy's "Hold Hands And Sing" and their acclaimed version of Luciano Berio's "A-Ronne" failed to live up to expectations, and Daryl Runswick's "1 Sing The Body Electric" appeared to be a cosmetic collection of virtuosic technique coupled to a superficially dazzling structure shining with the slippery sheen of fool's gold.

Other pleasures proffered by the festival included Anthony Davis' composition, substituted at the last minute for that of Stepan Wolpe, in the "Cross-town Jazz" concert; the momentum and quicksilver flow of ideas through Andrew Poppy's "Elvis Revenged" in the "Percussion And Electronics" programme; and Astor Piazzolla's concerts, which found him breathing new life, vigour and invention into the tango form with utterly seductive results.

The Almeida Festival could not have failed to satiate even the most voracious appetites.
Kenneth Ansell

■ ROUND MIDNIGHT Queen's Hall, Edinburgh: 15–25 August

MORRISSEY/MULLEN having opened the 5th "Round Midnight" series in front of Dominic Snyder's marvellous Jazz Giants backdrop, specially commissioned from the young Glasgow painter by Platform end the Scottish Arts Council, a rare appearance from the John Surman Quartet provided the first of several musical highlights. If Surman's playing confirmed the view that the baritone is his best horn – he explores the full range of the instrument's possibilities, from its deepest

LIVEWIRE

sonorities to those astonishing alto runs he squeezes from it – his outtings on bass clarinet were no less impressive. The shrill and acerbic tone which sometimes mars his soprano playing was not in evidence: the soprano solo with which he opened the second set was one of the evening's most memorable moments.

The group, John Taylor on piano, Chris Laurence on bass, and drummer John Marshall, responded to his coaxing, shifting the rhythmic and textural elements of Surman's compositions (some still provisionally or untitled) with a fluidity and spontaneous energy that was at times breathtaking. That these musicians, all collaborators of many years standing, and fresh from their Quintet tour with trumpeter Kenny Wheeler, responded so well to the music's requirements was crucial. Surman characteristically composes for specific combinations, and remains acutely attuned to the specific textural qualities of any piece; their collective interplay behind his inspired soloing emphasised these qualities, and left us regretting the infrequency of their visits.

Two visiting Americans took us further back into jazz history. **Nat Adderley** is one of the few modern players who still favours cornet over trumpet, ably backed by the Gordon Cruckshank Quartet, he brought his driving hard bop assault to bear on standards like a frantic "Milestones," "Straight, No Chaser" (Cruckshank's tenor solo here matched Adderley's effort) and his own "Work Song". The attack scroosily dropped in intensity when the quintet switched to ballads.

Illinois Jacquet goes back even further, and was joined by an equally vintage rhythm section of Milt Hinton, Gus Johnson, and pianist Ray Bryant, all in town for the concurrent McEwens International Jazz Festival. If they were feeling their years, it wasn't evident on stage. Jacquet attacked his tenor solos with a messianic fervour, while Hinton's fluid and agile bass weaved around the easy swing of Bryant and Johnson. Their enthusiasm for the music was infectious; Jacquet's undimmed energy and a rhythm section as smooth as twelve-year-old malt made the evening a sheer delight.

Jan Garbarek is a tenor player of a different stamp, and has been one of the genuine innovators in establishing a European jazz aesthetic standing aside from American models. On several pieces, the Quartet shifted away from the sparse, atmospheric structures associated with Garbarek's folk-derived themes.

It was fascinating, and instructive, to hear both Surman and Garbarek within so short a space of time, framed as they were by the contrasting approaches of Adderley, Jacquet, and the **29th Street Saxophone Quartet's** guided tour through black American music, from blues to bop to free jazz, with Sam Cooke and a little rap thrown in. Bobby Watson's leaning toward a Blakey-style hard bop is the sheet anchor for their eclectic explorations; they were a fitting climax to a series which had produced only one major disappointment, the strangely uninspired **Segun Adewale**.

Five concerts that will resonate in the mind in little over a week: "Round Midnight" has been a varied, imaginative, and hugely enjoyable alternative to the more traditional fare of the McEwens Festival.

Kenny Methieson



The jazz Giants look down



Illinois Jacquet



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FOR THIS SHIRT


question of the risk involved in lending to sovereign borrowers. It is important to put this in context. There are good reasons why banks should wish to lend to governments, private corporations and banks in other countries, in the same way as they do to any other customer. In some cases we have relationships going back over many years involving trade finance. Often, too, lendings have resulted from the support of major export projects, whether from the United Kingdom or other countries in which we operate.

The finance required for major projects has also become larger - for instance equipping an airline with a new jumbo jet and its spares costs £45 million and the 260,000-ton tankers now in service cost some £40 million each. It is clear that the world is becoming a more complex and more demanding place, and it is ever important that we should be able to manage the risks involved in such projects.

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YOU'VE BEEN RIPPED OFF

Wrangler 
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a hammer + sick

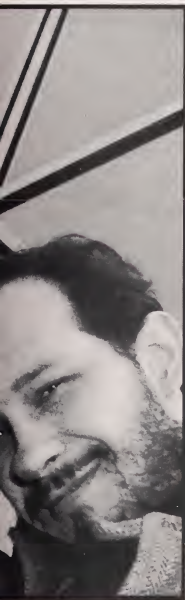


le sonance



THE GANELIN TRIO's visit to Britain received a blaze of publicity, but little light was shed on their music or the position of jazz in the Soviet Union.

GRAHAM LOCK picks his way through a minefield of Cold War propaganda and KGB agents in search of the Gorky Parkers.



tHE RUSSIANS have come!
"Hello," I say to drummer Vladimir Tarasov, shaking his hand.

"Hello," he beams enthusiastically. Tarasov, I've been told, is the one member of The Ganelin Trio who speaks good English.

"How long have you been in London?" I ask.

"Yes," he nods, still smiling.
"Er, no. H-o-w l-o-n-g h-a-v-e-y-o-u b-e-e-n i-n L-o-n-d-o-n?" I say it very slowly.

Tarasov frowns, shrugs. "Please, you wait. I get translator."

"No, really, it doesn't matter." But he just grins uncomprehendingly and hurries off. The sinking feeling in my stomach turns into a plummet. It occurs to me that my imminent interview with The Ganelin Trio has all the makings of a good West End farce. (No Jazz Please, We're British?)

First, though, we do the KGBebop.

DURING A lull in the soundcheck, the KGB man in the row behind me leans forward and speaks quietly in Russian to the translator.

"He wants to know who you work for," she says to me.

"The Wre," I say, and she translates it back into Russian. I watch the KGB man scribbling in his notebook and wonder why he didn't ask me himself, a few minutes earlier I'd heard him speaking perfectly good English. Here, I think, is my big chance to interview a Soviet spy. I slide along a few seats, turn around and say hello. I notice his notebook is filled with names. He sees me staring and smiles imperceptibly.

"I write down the names of everyone who is interested in the band," he says, holding out his notebook. "See, already I have twenty-three names in two days."

About here I begin to feel trapped in a badly-written thriller. My jaw clenched with suspicion, I glanced at his face, those smooth bland features, those dark, cold eyes, and I shivered. The moment passes and we start to chat. He tells me his name is Vladimir, that he works for the Soviet Ministry of Culture, that he's The Ganelin Trio's UK tour manager. He's young, affable, casually-dressed: hardly your stereotypical KGB heavy. But then, I reason, if he is an agent, he wouldn't look like one, would he?

"Are you sure he's KGB?" I ask Leo Feigin later.

"Of course!" he says impatiently. It was Leo Feigin - Russian émigré, owner of Leo Records, specialist in Russian jazz, most of it smuggled out of the Soviet Union - who had first warned me about "Vladimir".

"He's a coat, how do you say, a minder, a KGB man. He checks out who contacts the band. The Soviets are trying to find out how the tapes are smuggled out of Russia." He puts his hand on my shoulder and, to my astonishment, practically head-butts me.

"Graham, please," he whispers silently in my ear, "you must be very careful what you say."

Hmm. He's probably right of course, but Leo Feigin is not the most reliable informant. He was the person who told me Tarasov spoke good English.

STRANGE ELECTRICITIES crackle in the air. This is a historic occasion - the first-ever British visit by a Soviet jazz group - but other forces are at play too. Paranoia for one, most of it emanating from Leo Feigin, who's scurrying around in his cloak-and-dagger fantasy world trying to secrete Leo LPs in his car boot - "so the Soviets won't see them!" - and dreaming up absurd schemes to hide his identity from "Vladimir".



a hammer

"Don't call me Leo, call me Leonardo!" he pleads.

That will fool the KGB, Leo?

"Leonardo," he hisses, dashing off. "Be careful what you say!"

There's hysteria in the air too, a kind of frenetic curiosity as people from the Arts Council, the BBC, ITV, the Soviet Embassy, the Sunday papers, all swarm around, each busily fabricating their own version of The Ganelin Trio as a type of avant-garde jazz flora. Real Russians? Playing real jazz? Tell us, Mr Ganelin, how did this happen to you? Much of this publicity has been drummed up by the Contemporary Music Network (the Arts Council department organising the tour) as a last-gasp measure to protect their grant, believed to be a prime target when the government announce their annual round of savage Arts Council cuts in a few weeks' time. (You see, Iovachin, there are wheels within wheels.)

The trio take it all in their stride, remaining polite but inscrutable: Ganelin, the intellectual, small, dark, implausibly Gallic-looking, like a downbeat existential detective; Tarasov, curly-haired, lively-eyed, sucking on his pipe, earthy, amiable; Chekasin, nicknamed "the peasant", "the lone wolf of the steppes", always wandering off, a blissful, satyrlike smile, a prowling, physical presence. (Are appearances deceptive? Listening to their music, it seems to me they play very much like they look.)

Five years ago they were practically unknown in the West, then in 1981 Leo Records released *Live In East Germany* (reissued as *Catalogue*), an LP compiled from tapes that had been smuggled out of Eastern Europe. The fierce, turbulent music and the dramatic story of its appearance here caused a minor sensation in Western jazz circles. Further LPs on Leo—*Ancora Da Capo*, *Con Fuoco*, *Vide*, *New Wine*—and visits to Western Europe, including a tour of Italy, brought the trio international acclaim. Much of this interest centred on the group as cultural phenomenon: the little Russian jazz that had been heard in the West was highly derivative of American styles, now suddenly here was a Soviet trio who had apparently evolved their own personal form of jazz, drawing as much on Russian folk and classical music traditions as on American antecedents (though some critics and musicians see even closer similarities to the US and European avant-garde music of the Sixties and early Seventies).

A few Western commentators were quick to make political capital of the trio, hailing Ganelin's music as a rare expression of freedom in the midst of Soviet oppression. Cold War bluster and hypocrisy played their parts here — US critics are not renowned for their acuity in spotting the political import of homegrown jazz — but it's undeniable that jazz has had a peculiarly chequered history in the USSR, one month acclaimed as the protest music of the downtrodden Black masses, the next month denounced as an excrement of petit-bourgeois decadence. These quirks of official ideology took farcical turns — like attempts to ban saxophones and outlaw the

trumpet — but the ban also prove deadly. In 1937 Shostakovich and Prokofiev, the two leading Soviet composers, were locked in a bitter dispute over jazz which ended abruptly when (zavistno) Leonid Brezhnev were purged for violating the (then) pro-jazz Party line. Most of those composers were never seen again.

There's nothing to be heard to discern with any clarity. Leo Feigin's jazz is severely discouraged by the authorities, but The Ganelin Trio suggest the situation is less clear-cut. They say they are able to play as often as they like (on average, three or four times a month) and are guaranteed an audience of 1,000–2,000 people for every concert; they say Western jazz LPs are available in Russia, and that most leading Soviet jazz groups have been able to record.

But Melodiya, the state record company, has released a mere handful of Ganelin LPs, and their second — *Concerto Grosso* — was held back for two years on the whim of the director, one Comrade Shabanov, who remarked "Our people don't need this kind of music". The trio make their livings from other areas of music: Ganelin is a composer of opera, theatre and film music, Chekasin a teacher, Tarasov a member of both the Lithuania Radio and State Symphony Orchestras. Feigin says too that the group make no money from their foreign tours, that they are allowed to tour only because the Soviet economy needs all the foreign currency it can get. For their two-week UK tour, he says, each trio member will be paid about £200 while the rest of their fee — several thousand pounds — goes to the state music agency, Gosconcert. What he neglects to mention is that the Soviet government — so I'm told by the Contemporary Music Network people — are paying all the air fares for the trio's visit.

"The authorities treat the band atrociously," insists Leo Feigin.

"But the trio themselves say they're doing pretty well," I demur.

"Well, of course! What else do you expect them to say? He raises his eyebrows to the heavens.

"OK, Leo. But what else would we expect you to say?"

We're in a Catch-22 world. In the Cold War too, it seems, truth is the first casualty; and trust goes missing in action.

IF TRYING to sort out the relationship between jazz and the Soviet state is a mite tricky, trying to sift fact from fiction in the controversy over The Ganelin Trio's music is pretty well impossible. Here again a chief agent of confusion is Leo Feigin.

In his sleevebooks to the trio's recent *Strictly For Our Friends* LP, Feigin castigates British critics for failing to understand the group's music. "The trio has been labelled 'free'," he writes, "and yet Ganelin/Tarasov/Chekasin have never played free jazz." This is the same Leo Feigin who wrote in *The Wire* (issue 7) that the trio's *Con Anima* LP "can be considered the first Soviet record of free jazz" (his italics); who told Mike Zwernin in

International Herald Tribune (May 1983) that "the only free group that has stayed together as long is The Art Ensemble Of Chicago"; and who circulated the British music press with copies of a *Cadence* (June 1983) interview in which Yevgeny Ganelin said "That label exists... free jazz, we could call ourselves free jazz musicians".

In fact, most critics have noted that structure is of prime importance in the trio's music, something which the group — except for that odd *Cadence* comment — have also made clear: "Chekasin: 'We already have the whole piece in our heads. To tell the truth, we are not spontaneous in the generally-accepted sense of the word. Our improvisations are the filling out of the bones of the structure. The basic structural elements of the piece have always been thought out in advance'" (from the Soviet magazine, *Chorus*). This did not stop Leo Feigin from claiming in *The Wire* (issue 7) that the trio's music was "totally alien to the ideology of the (Soviet) state" precisely because of its "improvised nature" — and then, with wonderful irony, a few lines later it is he who complains of the Soviet government that they use the trio as "a propaganda weapon".

What is clear is that the trio's music chiefly comprises a series of suites, composed by Ganelin through the late Seventies/early Eighties; that these suites are complexly structured yet leave space for improvisation; that the group use what they call "polystylistics" as the basis of their methodology — by which they seem to mean that they draw on folk, classical or whatever devices suit their purpose rather than adhering to standard jazz forms. Sometimes — *Live In East Germany*, *Strictly For Our Friends* — the results are very impressive; sometimes — *Ancora Da Capo* — they are banal and boring. But, whichever, they provide little prime face evidence to back up Feigin's hyperbolic sleevebook rantings about The Ganelin Trio creating a totally new, unique form of music and being the saviours of jazz. In particular, his main contention that "the greatest innovation of The Ganelin Trio (is) the merging of the suite form with polystylistics" is left an unsubstantiated assertion: he makes no attempt to explain exactly how the trio's work marks a radical advance on that of jazz composers from Ellington, Mingus and Russell through to Westbrook, Taylor, Breston or Lecky.

A similar obsession with originality is shown by Feigin's fellow expatriate Elin Berber, who writes in his sleevebooks to the trio's latest Leo release *The Baltic Triangle*, that "Two well-known standards, 'Mack The Knife' and 'Summertime', acquire probably for the first time in avant-garde music a new aesthetic quality: from light music compositions they become compositions of serious contemporary music." So much for Albert Ayler! And I wonder if Kurt Weill and George Gershwin would agree that *The Threepenny Opera* and *Porgy And Bess* were merely light music compositions with little "serious" content. The main point, though, is that The Ganelin Trio use these songs as brief encores, and give "Mack The Knife" in particular the kind of jokey treatment jazz

+ sickle sonance

players have long accorded familiar tunes. That's all.

Barban, however (in yet another set of sievesnotes), has proclaimed that "The depth of Chekasin's frivolity is in a pre-ontological understanding of reality", so perhaps I'm simply being dense. (Though not so dense, I suspect, as Barban's prose: what, for example, are we supposed to make of a sentence like "Any analysis of the form of The Ganelin Trio's music must start with the main inner idea of their artistic activity, their musical conduct: to combine the free formation of personality with being."?) Still, I daresay it loses something in the translation.)

MY INTERVIEW with The Ganelin Trio loses nearly everything in translation. It's like one of those foreign movies where two characters argue furiously for several minutes, then the subtitle comes up "I don't agree, Natasha". Deprived of the linguistic nuances, the tonal inflections, in which a personal meaning is located, I'm unable to engage the trio in dialogue. In fact, this is less like an interview than an international security conference: musicians, photographers, translators, Arts Council reps, Leo Feign and friends, all sit around, throwing in their ha'penceworth. About the only person not present is Vladimir the Coast, but I daresay he's got the entire hotel bugged anyway.

This is what it's like.

Lock: "In your 1979 Chorus interview, Tarasov said he would like to concentrate on jazz full-time, while Chekasin said that for him it was just a hobby. How do you feel about that now?"

Translator translates. Group discuss question for several minutes.

Translator: "Tarasov says now it is the other way around."

Chekasin interrupts. Russian speakers all chuckle heartily.

Translator: "Chekasin disagrees. He says for him it is still a hobby. Really, he is a horsebreeder."

General laughter.

Arts Council Person: "What was that? He's a farmer?"

Translator: "No, he said he was a horsebreeder. It was a joke."

Arts Council Person: "Oh, I see. Russian humour! Hahaha."

We carry on like this for 15 to 20 minutes. I ask a question, the trio argue, I get a one-sentence resumé from the translator. Ganelin and Chekasin do all the talking; Tarasov just sucks his pipe and keeps winking at the young woman who's come to photograph him for *The Face*. Little is revealed: Ganelin confirms that his music is mostly composed and polystylistic, though he says he draws on folk music's "spirit" more than specific folk forms; he says that the trio play a "music of mutual accompaniment" which follows the laws of polyphony — "there is an idea, then a counter-idea, and each is accompanying the other and changing all the time" — and he characterises this as "a symphonic approach" rather than the traditional jazz format of soloist and

accompaniment.

And that's about it. Except for the one question I have to ask, though I know what the answer will be. One of the most-quoted remarks on Ganelin's music is Joachim Berendt's comment that "Many listeners perceived this music as a cry for freedom". The group, of course, will deny that it is any such thing, either because a) it isn't a cry for freedom, or b) it is a cry for freedom, but they are not free to say so. Yet not to ask them seems a kind of cop-out, a surrendering to hopelessness at ever being able to sort out this crazy tangle of truth, diplomacy and total fiction. Besides, I tell myself, we may glean something — there are 1000 ways of saying no.

So I ask.

Lock: "What do you think of Berendt's comment that people hear your music as a cry for freedom?"

Stunned silence. Oh my God, he's mentioned political Leo Feign's eyebrows shoot heavenwards. Arts Council Person mutters, "No one's said that on this trip!" Translator translates question. Ganelin leans forward, speaks intently.

Translator: "Ganelin says that if he (Berendt) wants to see it like that, that's his — not problem exactly, but his opinion. For us (the trio), music can't express anything but itself. There is no question of anything political, it's just music."

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief. Ganelin leans back in his chair, smiles inscrutably. Tarasov winks at *The Face* photographer.

A LITTLE later, I'm taken aside by a couple of people who wish to impress upon me that the Contemporary Music Network is a) doing very good work, and b) in imminent danger from government cuts. Will I please mention that only one percent of the Arts Council's budget is spent on new music, and even that is now under threat? And if the GLC is abolished, which the government is pushing for on purely political grounds (their words), will I please stress that live minority musics will practically vanish from the capital? Well, yes, I'm happy to report these facts: it's a fine irony that my first encounter with Soviet jazz should end with a plea for me to publicise just how much devastation the British state is about to wreak on our "freedom of expression". (You see, tovarich, we are all but pawns in the chess game of life.)

I wander out into the night and walk along a deserted Tottenham Court Road. I'm glad the Ganelin case is closed. I was going crazy trying to sort it all out — who was saying what for which reasons... I then become aware of the footsteps. Someone is tailing me. KGB? MIS? My hand closes on the squat automatic in my raincoat pocket. Suddenly I swing around to face my assailant. BAM BAM BAM. With a sickening thud the body hits the pavement and rolls into a puddle. I take a step towards it, but nearby a police siren begins to howl its desperate cry for freedom. I turn up my collar and vanish into the night. ●



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SCREEN REVIEW

MAX HARRISON reviews
Brigitte Berman's film
biography of Bix Beider-
becke.

AMONG THE poignant facts to emerge from *Bix* was that most of those involved at a personal level in the Beiderbecke story have survived. And all of them – relatives, schoolmates, girlfriends – were interviewed by the inspired and conscientious maker of this two-hour film. Whilst watching, it was impossible not to wonder how these staid mid-Westerners felt on finding themselves questioned intently about that disreputable young man who died so long ago. What never seemed in doubt was that, just like the musicians, they had not been able to get him out of their minds. Repeatedly his fellow jazzmen said that when Bix soloed he appeared to be remote from the rest of the band, in a world of his own; and it was clear from several of the interviews that his singularity, indeed his separateness, became evident quite early in childhood.

There is a clue here to the reasons for the extreme rarity of even moderately good films on substantial creative figures. Locked into an apparently incurable persecution mania, jazz fans believe the shortage is peculiar to their music. Yet in reality films like *A Song to Remember*, which travesties the life of Chopin, are every bit as insulting to subject and audience as *Lady Sings the Blues* or *The Benny Goodman Story*. As one of Orwell's characters did not quite say, "Each human being is unique, but some are far more unique than others." The absolute individuality of a great artist is incomprehensible, in fact anathema, to the corporate mentality (as manifest, incidentally, in politics as well as commerce), and eludes the standardised procedures of a major industry such as films. If as rare a creature as Beiderbecke is to be caught, a distinctly subjective approach is required; and that is what we find, applied with impressive insight, in *Bix*.

Being its producer, director, editor and co-writer (with Val Ross), Brigitte Berman is the one chiefly responsible for this. She was born in Germany, lives in Toronto, and makes documentaries for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, although this latter had no connection with the film here discussed. Apparently a friend suggested that she sample jazz, mentioning Beiderbecke as one of the musicians to whom she might listen. She became possessed by his music and by the need to make a film about him. The obsessional aspect of such a project is important, symbolising a personal link with the subject,

even if long dead, that is essential if real understanding of an elusive (in fact disquietingly original) human being is to be first achieved and then conveyed to others. Ms. Berman obtained a grant, borrowed further money, got badly into debt, and spent over four years making the film.

Bix stands revealed as a much photographed man. That is not surprising in view of the indelible impressions, musical and otherwise, he left on all sensitive individuals who heard him improvise or made significant personal contact. (But, as well as pointing to the diligence of Ms. Berman's research which unearthed all this material, it does raise a question as to why books, magazines and record sleeves have always used the same few pictures.) The black-and-white stills often alternate with interviews photographed in colour with surviving musicians who played with Beiderbecke. These juxtapositions dramatise the film's leaping backwards and forwards across the decades, the simulation of time-travelling being a major cinematic resource that is not often employed to genuinely imaginative ends.

Besides finding all the relevant people, Ms. Berman rediscovered some of the key localities of Bix's career. Particularly affecting was a view of the apparently long-deserted ballroom at Hudson Lake, one of those many places that once echoed to the free flight of his countless irrecoverable improvisations. Also seen was the beautiful yellow and white frame house in a tree-lined street in Davenport, Iowa, where he was born and to which he periodically returned while making attempts to break his alcoholism. Indeed, it was part of his trouble that he never escaped his family, and two letters written towards the end of his days that are included in the film's linking commentary (finely spoken by Richard Basehart) indicate how important their approval was to him. Predictably, the family's response was to be horrified by his career, though again it must be said that this problem was never unique to jazzmen. The respectable Halle surgeon's family into which Handel was born did not consider music an at all suitable profession for their son, and they tried to stop him; hopelessly, of course.

THE FILM leaves no doubt of Beiderbecke's growing alienation as he moved through his twenties, but his withdrawal (into music and drinking) was not only from conventional society, as he was afflicted, like many outstanding artists, by less gifted practitioners. Perhaps nobody wishes to be reminded of the incomprehension of Bix shown by the permanently adolescent Mezz Mezzrow in his

book *Really the Blues*. In fact a number of voices are raised in the film – not least that of a Louis Armstrong fully divested of his happy-showman persona – against the hangers-on who letterly pestered the life out of Beiderbecke, giving him no peace. The parallel with the camp followers of Charlie Parker's final years, about whom Ross Russell has written with such justified bitterness, is obvious.

Subjective insights attained by Ms. Berman and conveyed through the highly flexible way she deploys her material balance the absolutely consistent admiration of the musicians – again with Armstrong in the lead. The film's considerable, and very American, emphasis on Bix's success, on the widespread acceptance of his work among what audience jazz had during his lifetime, is counterpointed by an awareness of his special difficulties. But these were musical as much as personal, and not much is said about his music during these two hours, though it is heard almost continuously on the soundtrack. How were the patterns of sound which so unerringly communicate that unrepeatable vision actually put together? Why this note rather than that? Here is an important question, for his choice of pitches remains surprising even when one has known most of his recorded solos by heart for a period which in the present writer's case approaches 40 years.

A lot was made of his tone, and this is justified as it was an important feature of what may be called his line of aesthetic attack. Several musicians affirm that, despite widespread effort, nobody ever managed to duplicate it. Rhythmically Beiderbecke was something of a conservative, though not too much should be made of this in view of his subtle note-placement. His greatest daring was in the relation between melody-building and harmonic innovation. It has not been properly understood by those who have written the history books of jazz that some of the innovations claimed by, or for, the postwar modernists could always be found on Bix's records, and, as Eric Thacker has pointed out, these were in the 1930s developed further by such players as Pee Wee Russell. A provincial lack of awareness of their own tradition on the part of many jazz musicians has meant that some things have had to be discovered several times over.

One could note other of the film's omissions, mostly, no doubt, involuntary. For example, it more than once tells us that our hero was "always reading", but did nobody notice what he read? Even without this knowledge – without even its surprising intimation of Beiderbecke's skill as a poker player – *Bix*

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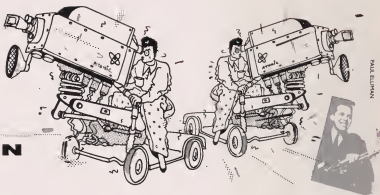
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PAUL SCHARF

.....back on the set.

LAST MONTH I was wondering where Dexter Gordon ends and Dale Turner begins.

Dexter plays Dale in *Autour de Minuit* (Round Midnight), a movie by Bertrand (Death Watch, A Sunday In The Country) Tavernier which was introduced on these pages last August and should be in the can by the time you read this.

I play a bit part, a journalist—two lines, three days' shooting. Muscling my way to the bandstand after Dale's first set at the Blue Note in Paris (1959), I ask him: "Still cool for Wednesday at three?"

He looks blank, unseeing. Dale is not in good shape: "Is what cool?"

"The interview for the *Herald Tribune*."

"Oh. Sure."

That's all, not much, but a good hook for a fly on the wall.

Based somewhere between Bud Powell and Lester Young towards the end of their lives, Dale is a tired giant. The first day of shooting, that first set, Dexter blew like a tired giant. Burned-out and flat. Too bad, you might say, here's a shot at the first sensitive jazz film and Dexter's blowing it. But he's supposed to be blowing it. The role calls for a master on a perhaps terminal bed roll. That first bad night is in the script. It is not easy for a good player to play badly in public. It might be good acting.

Dale is befriended by a young French fan, Francis, whose friendship rescues him for a time. The relationship is believable and extremely moving. Real life parallels fiction. Not that Dexter's terminal, but he's obviously tired. Tavernier says that he believes his film is breathing new life into a tired Dexter. Two French friends, will they bring the American giant back?

Dexter plays the saxophone and the saxophonist. Visually and audially it's all on him. If

he blows it the movie's blown. At the beginning when Dale is supposed to be blowing it, who's who? Who's blowing it? Who is being rescued, and by whom? The tension is not make-believe.

Meanwhile the meter's ticking, a \$40,000/day nut. And Dexter is not moving fast. He's got "borderline diabetes" and a questionable liver. A shot of brandy doesn't help and his wife just barely stops him from dumping two sugars in his coffee. Sugar drains energy from diabetics. The ailment is raw, he does not have the habit of catering to it. Eight hours a day under hot lights, tiresome waiting, three or four takes, and then three or four more with other angles and focuses. He'll need all the energy he can muster.

Tavernier co-wrote the screenplay (with David Rayfield). He has allowed the actors to modify certain dialogue. Tavernier is loose, cool, intelligent and respectful; lips turned up in a perpetual fixed smile à la Dave Brubeck. He does not sweat in his thick sweater under hot lights. How much of it is cool, how much being blinded by the light of the myth?

What myth? Tavernier appears to have bought the myth of the misunderstood poet of improvisation whose undervalued talent has earned pampering without considering the possibility that he may be dealing with what is at least to some degree a spoiled child. Bird had that side too: "Nobody loves me."

Shooting grinds to a halt while Dexter changes a reed. The meter ticks. The rhythm section keeps time with the blues. Is Dexter playing the prima donna, or just getting inside Dale? Dale would certainly have kept everybody waiting changing reeds.

Producer Irwin (The Right Stuff, Raging Bull) Winkler, who put this Franco-American package together, was on the set for a day. French Minister of Culture Jack Lang has

been saying that such co-productions will save the sick French film industry. He arrived with two limousines, some gorillas and three medals—for Dexter, Herbie Hancock and Winkler. A lot of good people have been saying a lot of bad things about this Socialist government, but a Minister of Culture who bemoans Dexter Gordon and Herbie Hancock cannot be all bad.

Rumour has it that Herbie wants to be an actor, and he's credible as the understanding but concerned buddy Eddie Wayne. The bartender pours a glass for the band, everybody that is but Dale, who complains: "I seem to be invisible." The bartender has his orders—no booze for Dale, a dangerous boozier. Picking up a line from Lester Young, Dale calls the bartender "half a mother-lucker". Eddie offers his wine glass, in which there only remains one swallow, to Dale: "Here, finish mine, man."

"Thanks," says Dale: "I just needed that to wash the last one down."

Before going up to play the last set of the first night, Eddie puts his hand on Dale's shoulder and asks him: "Hey, are you alright, man?" Dale looks bad. The compassion seems real, but who's asking who? Who is being compassionate towards who?

With Hancock, John McLaughlin, Pierre Michelot and Billy Higgins, the rhythm section is boss. They try and pick up the giant and the script says they do, but this is just getting started and I will not be around to report the results. My scene is shot.

Now I recall when, waiting to shoot it, Dexter said to me: "We can really do something with this movie."

"It's a beautiful story," I answered. "I know." He smiled and waved his hands enigmatically: "It's my life." ●

continued from page 21

allows us, if we make the imaginative effort, to enter some way into his life. That is enough; and a surprising achievement if it takes us less far into his music this may be because his own attitude to it grew ambivalent. In an article, "Indiana Twilights," published in *Jazzletter*, February 1983, Richard Sudhalter, who probably has done even more research on this subject than Ms. Berman, wrote that the cornettist "had kind of grown outside his infatuation with hot jazz by 1925. He came more and more to consider it a manifestation

of adolescence." That is hard to accept in the light of the poetic intensity of the finest recorded solos of 1927-28, yet one is reminded of Parker's wish to escape the limitations of jazz as it was conceived in his time. He wanted Stefan Wolpe to write pieces for him, and applied to Edgard Varèse for composition lessons—this latter choice, considering Varèse's exact position in twentieth-century music, showing brilliant insight. Sudhalter again: "I am convinced that [Beiderbecke, had he lived, would] have ended up

either writing for the movies, if the commercial lures had snared him; as a significant American composer; or out of music altogether."

It is possible to be too gifted for jazz? In the event, death brushed that niddle aside in both cases. It seems appropriate, anyway, to end with Bird as well as Bix. There were two of the most original minds ever to be applied to this music, and they will remain centres of discussion for so long as interest in it lasts. Meanwhile, we should be grateful to Brigitte Berman for bringing us much closer to one of them. ●



JACK KELLY



DAVID CONKO

COOL SPOOLS

DESSA FOX
explores the netherworld between music videos and videos that are all music.

ART BLAKEY AND THE JAZZ MESSENGERS AT RONNIE SCOTT'S
(Hendring)

ONE NIGHT WITH BLUE NOTE VOL. I
(PMI)

NINA SIMONE AT RONNIE SCOTT'S
(Hendring)

ONE OF the genuinely entrancing things about pop video is its ability to kid itself, especially where the word 'authenticity' meets the word 'promotion'. Pop clips are by now apologetic about the things we associate with video – the dry ice, the venetian blinds, the teen tonsils on parade – and as an antidote regularly manufacture something known as 'pure performance', ie no-fills stage promos. This type almost always takes place in a small club or studio, wherein the band is invited to show 'blazing realism' or 'savage intensity' (also known in the trade as 'heavy-duty warts'). Afterwards, everyone makes all the right noises about all the right noises.

Unfortunately, promotional video almost never leaves the word 'promotional' at home. The small club inevitably turns out to be a select small club, coincidentally entertaining off-duty fashion models. The 'objective' camera creeps thighwards out of sheer habit, and the band – these days, more accustomed to 35 millimeter tripods than to live audiences – are unswervingly conscious of where the camera is, and how they look in front of it.

But here we find three little shocks – cassettes in which musicians could not care less about all matters photographic (or: that smoky little jazz club is real). To eyes well used to pop, jazz on video looks perfectly criminal, since pop laws are being broken all

over the place. It's the nonchalance that startles, and the almost audible listening from all present, and the fact that the occasional whacko in the audience is allowed to annoy everyone without ending up on the editing room floor (check out the slap-happy table tapper in Art Blakey's set). Here, Nina Simone is free to behave like a woman of talent, not a worried lady in a miniskirt. Art Blakey is free to look – well, old (and has a beautiful collection of grins to show for it). The camera is free to concentrate on the execution of music, and the audiences are free to let affection fall where it may. In short – the glee is free.

Recorded in February of this year, the 58-minute *AB AT JMS* is all about craft so subtle that a pop fan would dub it samey, or eggheaded. They're neither, of course; where jazz vs. pop is concerned, the Messengers embody the difference between a prism and a flashlight. The set features "On The Ginza", "Want To Talk About You", "Two Of A Kind", and "Dr Jekyll", with fine-grained saxophone from Donald Harrison. The bad news is that Terrance Blanchard's trumpet is tussled up with a mawkish star filter throughout; otherwise, the camera stays courteous.

ON WBN Vol I is by anyone's standards an Event, and therefore most likely to receive lashings of video effects. Surprisingly, the stage is clutter-free, and the editing exhibits not a trace of the usual rubbernecking. The sterling approach seems only fitting, since the performers add up to a sort of parliament of brilliant.

Blue Note's sixty minutes document only part of last spring's symposium in New York, in which twenty-eight musicians gathered to commemorate the label's rebirth. Vol I records one-fifth of the five-hour be-bop to post-fusion marathon, with Vol. II due before Xmas.

The master of ceremonies – the only choice – was Herbie Hancock. Here, Hancock plays his 1966 "Cantaloupe Island" with trumpeter Freddie Hubbard, bassist Ron Carter and drummer Tony Williams, all of whom featured on the original Blue Note recording. There are two turns from Stanley Jordan ("When You Wish Upon A Star", "Jumpin' Jack"), and Hubbard offers a trellis rip through the old Messengers hit "Moanin'". "Bouquet" is here (Hancock, Carter, Hutchinson), "Broadside" (Wallace, McBea, De Johnette) and most of the aforementioned on "Little B's Poem".

Dolphy's "Hat and Beard" will have to wait until Christmas, together with the post-bop finale.

In *NSLARS* the pop parallels get a single look-in; Simone is plainly A Personality, and Personalities are the very stuff of video. When a particularly vivid performer takes the stage the cameras goggle as close as possible, interested in every gesture, video is convinced that artistry reveals itself in nods and pauses and facial detail. For the singer, the trick is to remain unself-conscious through a wilderness of close-ups.

This lady is self-conscious about nothing (except maybe her marital state; in the last interview sequence she blurts "And I want to get married"). She has an unassailable dignity, of course; you get the feeling that the years of every conceivable interview, camera tactic, and audience response have been permitted to flow right by her. Nina Simone poses for no one, and these thirteen tracks practically stand up and forbid 'promotion' to enter the room.

PICTURED: ART BLAKEY AND NINA SIMONE





SNAP

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The team of judges will be Annie Whitehead (our guest celebrity), Richard Cook and competition organiser Jayne Houghton.





Wynton



YOUNG MEN

with the golden horns

Adept technicians or brilliant young masters? Cold fish or hot cats?

RICHARD COOK suggests that the Marsalis brothers are more than the latest thing in tired old jazz music.

SINCE IT fell into the jazz coinage, we have marvelled at the name Marsalis. The two eldest sons of pianist Ellis, Branford and Wynton Marsalis have become the touchstone for jazz in the Eighties as a music that can be creative without compromise – and without sacrificing marketability. They are brilliant and successful young men. And they have attracted attention and debate like nobody since the most volatile periods of the public Miles Davis.

It seems like every time the jazz tradition is faced with extinction, along comes another dazzling young trumpeter. In 1981, we began hearing about a trim, well-dressed 19-year-old who'd taken the trumpet chair in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers and was sparking that group more sensationally than anyone since the days of Lee Morgan and Freddie Hubbard. A few records offered some testimony to the story. Wynton Marsalis, born late in 1961, a slight, bespectacled figure with a particularly sly smile and a demeanour that mixed the streetwise with the studious mind, was insisting that a young man could play jazz and make it good, valuable and accessible.

It sounded at first like someone with a special facility for hard bop tempos and phrases – after all, Wynton was playing with the Messengers, hard bop's premier graduation course. Listening to the typical set recorded on *Keystone 3* (Concord) makes the point. Marsalis solos with the assertion and sure-footedness across the register that marked all his predecessors with Blakey. His moves have a rapid articulation that makes the scale crisp and bright; his phrases dart with a dancer's grace. He finds air in the fastest tempos. "In Walked Bud" has him glancing off high peaks and sewing the solo together with longer note values that tense listener and player for the next spring. It isn't glib, but it is facile – and it faithfully observes an instinctive hard bop syntax, a kind of finely compressed energy.

His trumpet tone was already intact – a small magnesium flare, smoothed free of anything voluptuous. It's a craftsman's tone rather than a technician's. His attack was controlled but not as clean as it is now. It had its first serious outing in Wynton Marsalis, his swiftly recorded debut as leader.

Columbia signed Marsalis while he was still with the Messengers and recorded half the LP in New York, half in Japan. The teenager had already played a tour of the East with a stellar quartet including Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams and Ron Carter (enshrined in *Quartet*). This was someone already respected in heavy company. By the time he'd left Blakey and arrived in Britain to play a Ronnie Scott season with his own band in the summer of 1982, Marsalis' mana had struck. The trumpeter was so hot that he seemed in danger of immolation before his 21st birthday.

Through it all, he kept imperturbably cool. I talked with him during that London season. Backstage, we could hear the busy strains of the fusion outfit that was playing support. "It's OK," he shrugged, scating vaguely along with one of their lines. His glittering, half-amused smile told a different story. Why was he playing this music – which some were already calling revivalist in an era that had come to accept avant garde shocks as commonplace?

"It's the hardest music to play. I decided I wanted to do this because nobody else was really doing it. It's something that's going down the drain – the tradition is so great, but there's so many misconceptions because of the nature of musicians and the conditions they have to play in. It was my duty to try and play this music, on the highest level I can play it on."

He has become an infrequent interviewee – like all those whose public attention threatens to engulf their work – but Wynton's pronouncements are distinguished by a steely certitude that can seem brusque, at least. Yet, of course, he can back up everything. When I sidled the term hard bop into the conversation,

YOUNG MEN

he pounced: "There wasn't no be-bop licks in that set."

Well... no, they weren't played in a be-bop way, for sure. What was implicit about all this was not so much a romantic, pioneer kind of innovation – the only sort that most critics and listeners can recognise – but a concern to develop a whole new side to the discussion. Marsalis wasn't just talking about playing new notes, or joining them up in different ways. He was (not unreasonably) setting a standard for an entirely fresh deal for the jazz musician.

This is an idea frightening to record companies, pundits and audiences alike. In the conspiracy to keep jazz small, such vaulting ambition is dirty talk. It's a threat to the status quo of artifice. Good grief – our elitism is under siege!

SO FOR all the excitement generated by a musician whose best music is as exciting as any of that of his earlier peers, there's been a mounting reaction of cautionary words against taking Marsalis too 'seriously' as the great hope. It's one of those absurd ironies that cartwheel through the music. He was welcomed precisely because his work put its faith in the continuing strength of hard, melodic, pellucidly skilled jazz musicianship at a time when all forward movement supposedly lay with an increasingly marginalised Free school. Whether he likes the tag hard bop or not, Marsalis plays in a manner that hard bop followers can warm to. Suddenly, as the aura around him eases a little and he settles into a steadier period of maturing, the applause seems much more grudging. Marsalis hasn't turned the cosmos on its ass: so now people are calling him too chilly, too clever, too lacking in that magical lustre of soul.

Marsalis would have a good answer to that. His dialectical chops are in very good shape. Back to 1982 for a moment: "There are people who believe that jazz is not an academic music. What I have to tell them is that once a tradition is established, an academy has to go along and support and develop it. My technique has come from studying that tradition. If you say you want to play something new, that doesn't sound like anyone else, then that's what you'll sound like – nothing."

One is reminded of Cecil Taylor's remark to Valerie Wilmer – "Each man is his own academy." In the Marsalis academy, technique is the doorway to all areas of expression. "Sad" is a word he loves to use, as a gently cruel fingering of deficient technique. But the point about Marsalis's still-incipient authority is that we don't cringe under his technique the way we do when faced with Corea or Brecker. If Marsalis is still short of being a full-grown stylist, his gifts are touched by a reserve urssual in one so precocious.

His records as a leader offer no rampage into unexplored heights. As his sound is sometimes reminiscent of the young Miles Davis, so his first CBS albums partake of the atmosphere of Davis's early Blue Notes, a thoughtful, symmetric purchase of subtle harmonies and discreet shadings.

"Waterfalls" from the Keystone 3 set is a prototype taste of his writing: a theme that sets up a big climax which is eschewed for a quiet drop. It's a favourite device. In themes like "Father Time", "The Bell Ringer" and "Hesitation" Marsalis writes lines that glide with debonair ease, every emphasis finely paced. Improvisations move out of the

bilfurcated horn parts without having to be marked solo here.

One expects decoration, yet there's actually little. Nor is there much of the grandstanding associated with hard bop. Sixteenth notes appear as a peppering amid very unfrantic designs. The surface impression is of a link with Davis's ESP group, but where Miles and Shorter emphasised on the most abstruse planes, the Marsalis brothers converse much more directly. The leader ensures that every part is chiselled.

Wynton Marsalis and *Think Of One* are consequently a little cool in form, and there is more flamboyant Marsalis elsewhere: on the *Fathers And Sons* record with dad Ellis, where the trumpeter finds an almost garrulous fire in "Twelve's It", and the sometimes meandering *Quartet* collection, where he has his best opportunity to stretch out – and shows a tendency to use startling fillips when he's unsure where to take a solo. All the same, those two 'leader' records are statements of coiled power which are breathtaking for one of his age and experience. The way he plays some phrases is imperious, even haughty in its confidence; and it's superb jazz trumpet.

It's also a music that's civilised to the point where all these charges of coldness come marching in. Wynton's style is inefable in its discretion: he just won't play the crowd-pleasing attack which is supposed to be a black trumpeter's legacy. He keeps questioning the rules.

Like – we're conditioned to new stars cutting discs by the handful. Marsalis's jazz records since leaving Blakely have been few in number (three under his own name in three years). Jazzmen are used to whatever recording conditions are thrown together; his LPs are carefully balanced recordings, quality mixes (admittedly he records for a very big company). Marsalis apparently sees no paradox between digital sound and sharp, substantial music.

This kind of attitude adds up to somebody who is, as suggested earlier, a dangerous commodity: a hip, talented, extraordinarily aware black artist. Worse still, he has the inclination to crack the classical world too. Two albums in the concerto repertoire have an interpretive ebullience that's as thrilling as any of his jazz work. It might seem like a hankering after respectability if Marsalis weren't so damn good. Listen to the lingling cadenza he constructs for the *Alegro* of the Haydn Concerto. The calm way he sets about all this work goes still further against stereotypes – the hedonistic spiral of the romantic's jazz life hardly seems to touch him. It certainly doesn't colour the music.

That's why, perhaps, his treatments of "My Ideal" and "Who Can I Turn To" seem callow. It's not that he is immature as a ballad player (or, presumably, immune to heartbreak), more that the open-faced nostalgia of such tunes is alien to a player who prefers his sensuality to be fine-spun. In his most recent LP (a new CBS album is due shortly), *Hot House Flowers*, he faces what was once an obligatory test for a great soloist: the strings intrude on some of his most adventurous playing. He treats "I'm Confessing" – still best remembered as a classic vehicle for Louis Armstrong – with the kind of cavalier swagger that's supposed to be beyond him and still pulls it into the Marsalis universe of well-chosen words.



HIS BROTHER Branford, senior by one year, has until recently garnered much less attention. He began as an alto player, joining Blakely a year after Wynton in place of Bobby Watson. After Watson's nagging, vinegary style, Branford seems bright but thin-blooded. His solo in "In Walked Bud" manages to start out rather like Lee Konitz. He switched to tenor and soprano and joined his brother's band with pianist Kenny Kirkland: it was that



Branford

unit that visited London in 1982.

In this group, Branford plays as a detailed and slightly cantankerous foil to his brother. His solos have less of Wynton's instantaneous ingenuity, more of a droll though unsmiling reserve; but when he digs in, the elder Marsalis sometimes outswings his leader. He offers no great personal stamp on the records by the band, and it's his own debut *Scenes In The City* which announces his gifts best.

In some ways this is a darker, more diverse world than Wynton proposes in his music. The opening "No Backstage Pass", an improvised tenor blues, sounds like a stab at Rollins virtuosity, and its big circumlocutions are exciting without leading away from stasis. "Scenes In The City" is a Mingus melodrama where the music is strictly programmatic. The rest is more pointed. "Solstice", a Coltrane inspiration, has the tenorman inverting the old master's approach by fattening out his tone

and burrowing down to a few elemental phrases as the music progresses. "No Sidestepping" has the same kind of feel, a lounging, slightly lachrymose quality that piles a fearsome weight onto basically light gestures. There's a mordant air to this music. On soprano, he gallops through an original called "Waiting For Tain" and saunters dolefully along the funeral "Perable". Branford doesn't sound much like Wayne Shorter, as has been suggested, but he seems to have something of Shorter's deathly obliquity.

If his music frowns more than his brother's, Branford is less harsh about his choices of environment than Wynton. A run of work as a sideman has culminated in an appearance on Sting's LP *The Dream Of The Blue Turtles*. If you saw any of the Live-Aid marathon, you probably saw Branford piping a few desultory soprano obligatos during the Sting/Phil Collins set. On the *Turtles* LP he offers some intelligent but perfunctory embellishments to a dull collection of songs. It's hardly auspicious work, and this kind of crossover is no longer so novel. What Wynton thought about it has not, to my knowledge, been recorded.

It certainly isn't the kind of project the trumpeter would countenance. The most complete account of his current views emerges in a dialogue with Herbie Hancock conducted by *Musican* magazine. Marsalis there proposes a devastating critique of how writers and business alike cannot accept that "soul and emotion are part of technique". The force of his arguments resembles the impregnable justifications which are coming to typify his playing – and his argument here is, indeed, virtually unanswerable: "If somebody wants to say anything that has any kernel of intellect, immediately the word 'elitist' is brought out and brandished across the page to whip them back into ignorance. Especially black artists and athletes. We are constantly called upon to have nothing to say. I'm just trying to raise questions about why we as musicians have to constantly take into account some bullshit to produce what we want to produce as music."

This anger is delivered cold, and it stings the more powerfully because it's too rational to deny. Just as we can't pigeonhole the emotions raised by Marsalis in his music – there's no obvious joy, venom or laughter. He insists on the abstract powers of music to convey something different, something more profound than the accustomed triggers of happy/sad.

The Marsalis brothers are doing something more than forming the next rung on the ladder of the tradition. Their frame of reference is built around a greater aspiration than being a latest thing. It's a method that incorporates raising the whole level of conversation, to a point where imponderables like technique, feel and emotion are subsumed into a fresh, maybe even a visionary understanding of what a music's all about. That's why – apart from the matter of their making some marvellous music – we should be glad they're doing what they're doing.

And I didn't even mention those suits. ●

The Cecil Taylor quote is from Valerie Wilmer's *Jazz People* (Quartet). The dialogue between Wynton and Herbie Hancock was printed in *Musican* magazine earlier this year. Other quotes from an interview with Wynton by Cook previously printed in *NME*.



Art gets a trim, has a smoker the master in 1961.



thirty years of BUHAINA'S DELIGHT

ART BLAKEY! What's left to be said about this ageless master of the traps that hasn't already been spoken? After thirty years bossing the toughest, most consistently exciting jazz group in the world, Blakey seems as fired up as he ever was — a keeper of the flame without parallel.

Here we celebrate five great Messengers albums — not the five best, just five beauties from five different eras of this superb combo. From the crackling excitement of the early 1956 band to the distinguished, virtuoso elan of the outfit in 1985, these are some of the messages of The Messengers as five *Wire* writers have heard them.

1956: AN EARLY BOP

Hard Bop

(CBS)

Recorded: New York —

December 1956

Cranky Spanky, Stella By

Starlight, My Heart Stood

Still, Little Melonae,

Stanley's Stiff Chickens.

Jackie McLean (as); Bill

Hardman (tpt); Sam Dockery

(p); Spanky de Brest (b); Art

Blakey (d).

WAS THERE ever a front-line more severely beautiful than this? I wonder. Looking back on the subsequent path of the hard-bop tradition, McLean and Hardman sound barbed to the point of savagery, their terse edginess spiked with a fearful desperation. Remember, the last eighteen months had seen the deaths of Clifford Brown and Parker and, with the latter, the symbolic annulment of the be-bop cul-de-sac. No-one was dancing for joy, answers must have seemed hard to find, the only direction forward. But if you blinker yourself to the refractive properties of History and concentrate only on the music — which is, after all, the empirical and symbolic legacy of the times — then between the prickles an immense and warming humanity can be discerned.

Despite the upheavals and superficial changes, this aptly-titled album demonstrates the regenerative strength of tradition. Co-founder Horace Silver had left the

Messengers earlier in 1956 to leave Blakey the sole custodian of the two-year-old institution. Dockery and the oddly-named de Brest may only have enjoyed comparatively brief tenure in the second most famous rhythm section of the decade — and they certainly weren't its brightest lights as soloists — but the sense of continuity that Blakey seems to radiate succeeded in welding them seamlessly into the Messenger drive-unit. McLean and Hardman, both only 24 years old, sound confident to the point of arrogance, a fact that similarly testifies to the drummer's talents as a patriarchal catalyst. The quintet, as yet untouched by the subsequent obsession with wallowing soulfulness, unconstrained by matters formal or introspective, focus their energies on the simple (ha!) task of improvisation, on getting it out! This is the first great Jazz Messengers album.

At the risk of sounding daft, *Hard Bop* is an album of two sides. The first careens along at a furious pace, the two horns skewering the changes like birds of prey, the rhythm section sustaining great up-draughts of momentum, the whole an awesome demonstration of how power is not necessarily contingent on volume or quantity but an intensity of input.

"Cranky Spanky" is a Hardman composition — all hustle and bustle. McLean's curiously down-turned phrasing refuses the obvious, sung between the uprights of Blakey's pulse like an agitated hammock, while the trumpeter opts for a more conventional skating

belligerence and a sustained climax. However, these effulgences don't really prepare you for the brilliance of the "Stella By Starlight" that follows.

I am an unashamed and devoted fan of Jackie McLean – and, I think, for one reason in particular. His "hardness" has nothing to do with misplaced machismo (the conceptual recourse of homophobic bof fans) or a ability to play lots of notes very fast and very dramatically. It's entirely to do with his capacity for gouging out great welts of emotional music – admittedly bound by a largely rhythmic sensibility – and stripping that emotionalism of every last vestige of sentimentality or intellectual self-consciousness. Emotionally, and I mean emotionally, McLean's sound covers the obverse of the territory explored so ambiguously by Art Pepper in his final years. If only on that score, this "Stella" was the frame for Jackie's first genuinely great solo.

McLean's unburdenedness shows that he's beginning to escape the shackles of Bird. The tone takes your breath away, the phrases slipping out of each other with a teleopic passion. The overall shape of the solo is governed by an unerring forward motion, eschewing the imperatives of harmony in the sense that you can't hear the imaginary scales that tend to smother lesser talents. The casual, almost flip ease with which McLean passes the baton to Hardman is a delightful moment, betraying nothing but an intense mutual concentration – the Blakey touch once more. Hardman's own solo is another gem, opening out like a beautiful but dangerous flower. The deeper the trumpet digs, the clearer the influence of Clifford Brown can be heard, though the latter's ferked elegance is replaced by the acerbic pout of a young tearaway. Dockery squeezes out his most fluent solo of the session and the restatement of the theme returns to clear up the debris. A magnificent eight or nine minutes.

In sharp contrast the alto-romantic – and wittily ironic – piano introduction to the Rodgers and Hart chestnut "My Heart Stood Still" is convincing enough to fool the listener into benign conviviality. The woom of energy when the rest of the quintet engage with the melody is heart-stopping. Blakey sounds as if he's sat in a bowl of hot grils and Hardman appears to be amused by the idea, conjuring uncharacteristic giggles out of his horn.

"If you can't identify yourself on a record, you're in trouble. No good sounding like Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa or Dave Tough – they've made their mark. A drummer can't feel what they feel. He may play the same licks, but that's not the same thing."

Over on side two, however, things are less free and easy. "Little Melonae", named after McLean's small daughter, is an awkward, lurching tune that affords little scope for fluency. Hardman gets boxed in by his predilection for long, low-curved lines – he seems unwilling to make the spikey intervals the shape of the tune suggests. McLean is altogether more confident, hinting at the unpredictable style of his prime five years hence. Dockery wangles his way out of trouble with a clutch of Monkisms. It's a thoroughly un-Messenger-like tune that succeeds because of, rather than despite, its quirkiness.

Equally quirky and much less successful is "Stanley's Staff Chickens". Littering bizarrely between a four-square walk with waltz

passages and a hiccupping stomp, Blakey treats the lumpy pulse as an excuse for some extravagant bomb-dropping, while, once more, only McLean sounds able to perform beyond the call of duty.

Despite its disappointing end, *Hard Bop* is, to this writer, the definitive hard bop recording. Its beauty lies in its simplicity, its strength in its neivety. The album is also a marvellous exemplar of the Messenger nursery-process, as the performances of McLean and Hardman demonstrate – neither made a better record during the Fifties. If you're not put off by the sheer ferocity of texture or the sparseness of the playing then it is as rich an album as any.

Nick Coleman

1960: SHORTER HIT TOWN

The Big Beat

(Blue Note BST 84029)

Recorded: Englewood Cliffs – March 1960.

– The Chess Players, Sakeena's Vision, Politely, Dat Dere, Lester Left Town, It's Only A Paper Moon. Lee Morgan (t); Wayne Shorter (ts); Bobby Timmons (p); Jymie Merritt (b); Art Blakey (d).

I DARE SAY Wayne Shorter was delighted when his friend Lee Morgan invited him to join the Jazz Messengers late in 1959; a few weeks later, though, he may have had second thoughts when, at his first Blue Note recording session with the band, his Lester Young tribute "Lester Left Town" was the cause of a blazing row between Art Blakey and Alfred Lion. As the band struggled through several unsatisfactory takes of the tune, Lion became increasingly worried that the music was just too tricky to fit the Messengers' format. Blakey riposted that it was his band, he'd say what they played, and the session broke up in ecnomy. (It was finally released as *Africane* in 1981.) But five months later, the friction forgotten, the Messengers were back in the studio to record *The Big Beat*, their first Blue Note release to feature Shorter, and a new, immaculate version of "Lester Left Town" was one of its highlights.

I think critical opinion has underestimated *The Big Beat*, though in retrospect it's not hard to explain why: in terms of soloing, both Morgan and Shorter turned in more blistering performances later in their partnership (for example, on *Witchdoctor* and *Indestructible* respectively); and in band terms, the Messengers had yet to streamline the storming hard bop ferocity that became their unmistakable calling-card. But *The Big Beat* catches them at a fascinating turning-point: the soulful emphasis of past hits like "Moanin'" still retained in Bill Hardman's finger-poppin' blues "Politely" and Bobby Timmons' cheerful gospel swing through "Dat Dere", a future trait prefigured by intriguing, idiosyncratic Shorter tunes like "Lester Left Town" and the edgy, saw-toothed "Chess Players". (And the difference between *Africane*'s tentative "Lester" and the assured version here suggests just how much Shorter's writing was stretching the band.)

Then, *The Big Beat* is a more relaxed, thoughtful, offbeat performance than we usually associate with the Messengers: full of versatile but untypical lowkey touches that are easily overlooked, like the tip-toeing arrangement of "Politely" and the pensive minor drama they make out of the intro to "It's Only A Paper Moon", where Morgan plays superbly. One critical faction maintains that

Shorter and Freddie Hubbard were the classic Messengers frontline, but for me Morgan was the more interesting trumpeter: Hubbard had the firework brilliance and purity of tone, but Morgan's melodic feints and twists, his slurs, growls and half-valve quacks, resulted in a richness of detail, of light-and-dark shading, that gave the music rare character. He was a perfect foil for Shorter too; the latter's brusque, sleazy tone and oblique phrasing complemented by Morgan's terse sureness, his deft, funky wit.

Finally, a word about Blakey, in fine fettle here, kicking the beat and rapping out two brisk solos in the prescribed manner. But listen too as he brilliantly punctuates the long, loping theme of "Lester Left Town" – sizzling rimshots, a splash of cymbals, a roll on the snares. It's a fabulous display of sensitive, supportive drumming that doesn't just enliven the tune, but adds a whole new dimension. The beat may have been bigger, faster and sleeker on future Messenger LPs, but it's telling little details like that which make *The*



ALLAN TITUS

Big Beat such a pleasure to hear and hear again.

Graham Lock

1963: HARMONIES AT BIRDLAND Ugetsu

(Riverside OJC-090)

Recorded: Birdland, New York City, June 16, 1963

One by One; Ugetsu; Time Off; Ping Pong; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; On The Ginza.

Art Blakey (d); Freddie Hubbard (tp); Curtis Fuller (tb); Wayne Shorter (ts); Cedar Walton (p); Reggie Workman (b).

THE MOST immediately identifiable characteristic of the Jazz Messengers is the drumming of Buhaina himself. But this particular edition of the band, which stayed together from 1961 to 1964, added some of the elements that are now thought of as typical Messengers music.

The four writers boasted by this line-up (everyone, in fact, except the drummer and bassist) were especially good at creating originals which used Blakey's feel for dynamics – both in the general sense of creating an impetus and in the technical sense

of contrasting volume levels. You only have to listen to Shorter's opening "One by One" or Cedar Walton's title-track, to hear how this aspect of Art's artistry is built into the material.

Another factor which affected the Messengers' style at this time, and which has stayed with all the succeeding editions, was the introduction of modal sections into otherwise harmonically-oriented hard-bop tunes. To a certain extent this reflected the widespread influence of the Coltrane quartet, and was certainly aided by the arrival of ex-Trane bassist Workman to replace Jymie Merritt (Blakey's only personnel change during these three years). But the leader himself took to this approach like a duck to water, while sounding nothing at all like Elvin Jones (check out the title-track or "Ping Pong"), which unfortunately has briefer solos than the 1962 version later issued on Blue Note BN-LA473-J2. It seems quite plausible indeed that it was the Messengers who were most instrumental in assimilating and passing on the Trane influence to others in this

better or worse, whereas Blakey stayed stylistically in 1963. More power to him.

Brian Priestley

1978: BLOWING BACK FROM THE WILDERNESS

Reflections In Blue
(Timeless SJP 128)
Recorded: Holland, 4 December 1978.
Reflections In Blue, E.T.A., Say, Dr J, Mishima, Ballad Medley: My Foolish Heart/My One And Only Love/Chelsea Bridge/In A Sentimental Mood, Stretching.
Valerie Ponomarev (t); Robert Watson (as); David Schnitter (ts); James Williams (p); Dennis Irwin (b); Blakey (d).

long and sometimes indifferent period is difficult, but my choice goes to this unsensational yet finally very satisfying date by the band as it was shortly before Wynton Marsalis's arrival. As there was no composer of Shorter's stature in this band, in performance they would lead through the drummer's greatest hits; on record, in the studio, the book was freshened by some lightweight but useful material that fitted the group's historic complexion – melodies that combined a certain meriment with the solid beef of the big beat.

Pianist Williams wrote three of the themes. "Reflections In Blue" and "Say, Dr J" have horn parts that swing quite irresistibly off Blakey's four-in-every-every-every-bar moves, the latter track proving infamously memorable. It crackles off a vamping bass-piano riff that sounds like the apex of all those Bobby Timmons boogaloes; then the line mellows to suggest a way for the soloists to flicker between reflection and aggression. Schnitter's unassuming "Mishima" has little of



BUHAINA'S DELIGHT

respect.

Much more original at the time was the actual harmonic language of the three-voice front-line, especially in the writing of Shorter who had taken over as the group's musical director when Lee Morgan became unavailable in 1961. For most of the time since then, the Messengers have been a sextet rather than a quintet, and whoever has been responsible for repertoire has always tried for the group sound that Shorter got (aptly described by the title of his earlier piece "Sweet 'n' Sour" on QJC-038). Perhaps the best example here of this subtly discordant romanticism, which went straight into the work of Hancock, Corea, Kenny Wheeler, John Taylor etc. is "On the Gunza" but (like the references to Japan) it permeates all Shorter's output of this period. And, of course, it's a direct translation of that beautiful, curdled saxophone tone displayed on his ballad feature "I Didn't Know" (a standard also included in his quartet album on Affinity AFF 114).

The quality of the live recording, by the way, isn't the greatest but it makes an interesting change to hear the Messengers without that glossy Blue Note sound. The music, however, is excellent, and especially the contributions of Shorter, Hubbard and Blakey. It's an important document too, in that Shorter and Hubbard each went on to other things, for

WHEN THE great Hubbard/Shorter/Walton Messengers broke up in 1964, Blakey found it hard to organise groups with the all-embracing power of that line-up. Arguably, there was no championship Messengers until the Watson/Marsalis band came together in 1980. And on record, the later 60s and 70s remain comparatively poorly documented: some sturdy records with strong musicians like Bill Hardman, Chuck Mangione and Woody Shaw

"Young drummers? No one can come along and tell me, oh this kid isn't but 12-years-old and he's great. That's a bunch of bullshit! The kid has talent but he hasn't learned how to play. There isn't a certain way to do nothin' on drums! It's a bastard instrument, and there ain't no set way."
(All quotes by Mr Blakey are from an interview with Brian Case).

(Blakey must have employed more great trumpeters than every other bandleader put together) have disappeared from catalogues, and it took European labels to put the 70s Messengers back in the racks.

Choosing a characteristic album from this

Mr Weir's Japanese exotica – there's even a quasi-Latin interlude! But it's a pretty piece, and so is Watson's "E.T.A." which skips along on the leader's lightest cymbals.

Bobby Watson is the outstanding soloist throughout. His fast thinking comes out as big, bullying licks around a disarming R&B centre; some of his sounds rub close to the Free side of things (a player for all seasons, indeed), but his heart is in the executive sass and flurry of players like McLean and Stitt. I like Ponomarev's slowness of gesture, his fast flutters and occasionally probing harmonic turns; but he is suffering under the tradition of his trumpet chair and the demands of Blakey's constant stoking. Williams is adroit. Schnitter burly and short on mobility. The ballad medley is pitched competitively, and Watson wins (just) over Ponomarev: "Chelsea Bridge" is the most difficult and distant of these themes, and he catches some of the mist in Strayhorn's tune. Perhaps nothing of *Mosaic* and *Free For All* in this set. But the consistencies of *Reflections In Blue* offer their own kind of pleasure: without any outcroppings of genius or outside character, the music finds its own level of swing and stays absolutely on it throughout. Something that the best Messengers have always made a point of doing.

Richard Cook

continued on page 17

WHEN BOBBY Watson arrived in New York from Kansas City, carrying his alto saxophone, he knew he didn't have a minute to lose. Heck, he was 22 already! This was August, 1976, and it was necessary for his future plans that people got to know his name and his sound; so Bobby embarked upon the most comprehensive programme of sitting in since King Canute. He simply sat in for dear life.

"I made it my mission," he said, "to go out every night and sit in with somebody. New York is no place to move into just to watch TV. The city is heavy and it costs a lot of money to stay there, so I made a little money to feed myself by playing with rock groups. But my main crusade was to look for a chance to sit in, playing jazz, every night I could."

Bobby was talking in Edinburgh, having just completed an English two-week tour for Jazz Services. The quintet including four British musicians was given the name "The Young Lions". In Edinburgh, he had a single gig as a special guest of pianist Alex Shew, with British baritone player Johnny Barnes and trombonist Roy Williams, both total strangers to him, figuring in an unusual mainstream-to-bop sextet.

The chameleon-like ease with which Watson settles into his changing musical environment is a slightly unsettling facility to his admirers. Does it indicate a dilettante approach to his art? Is he trying to please all of the people all the time?

The answer is in the double-negative. As with other young jazz musicians of today—Wynton Marsalis, for example—Bobby Watson is simply interested in absorbing as catholic a musical experience as he can, broadening his craft and never turning his back on an opportunity for discovery. Perhaps it could be called the Sitting-in Mentality.

Indeed (to return to New York in 1976) even in those early days, he didn't sit in with just anybody. He was... selective.

"It's a bit like gate-crashing," he said, "but there's a proper way to go about it. I'd look in the newspaper and see—hey—Rahsaan Roland Kirk's playing at such-and-such a place. Now he let me sit in with him. But I didn't go along and say—'Hey, man, can I sit in?' That's a kind of aggressive thing to do. Instead, I'd go down and I'd say—'Maybe, is it possible, if you think, I'd be able to sit in with you later in the week?'"

Here Bobby grinned, an Honorary Doctor of Sitting-In Psychology.

"Then if they said 'Well, maybe, I'd go down and just listen for a couple more nights, so the people in the band knew I was listening and getting to know how everybody played. I think people kind of appreciated this attitude; it was devoting time to it, not doing it just for fun."

In that way, Bobby Watson found himself sharing the stand with sufficient big names to activate the average jazz festival... Curtis Fuller, Jimmy Forrest, Herold Mabern, Chris Woods, George Adams, Albert Dailey, Butch Miles, Billy Hart. Inevitably, he said, he would be heard by other musicians who called him up for gigs. His name was spread around; he was edging into the charmed circle.

One of the first gigs that came his way by this means was with a band including guitarist Roland Prince and drummer Billy Higgins. Even more important for the shape of his career since, Bobby's late-night industry and his emotionally searing style on alto brought him to the attention of Art Blakey, drummer and one-man university.

"I was playing in a freer, avant garde style in those days," Bobby said, "but I think Art heard some potential. He thought—'If I could just get this young man to slow down!'" So began Bobby Watson's 4½-year stint with the Jazz Messengers.

SINCE THE late-1950s, Art Blakey has kept his hard-playing sextet on the boil, bringing in young and promising unknowns by a process of selection which seems as creative, magical and reliable as his own drumming. They seem to appear out of thin air like a rimshot: crack, and there's somebody you've never heard of playing his heart out in front of the band, glowing with the heat of his own energy and, usually, displaying incipient originality. Meanwhile at the beck, The Old Master drums inscrutably.

Blakey's leadership and powerful talent for teaching has been praised by another of his graduates, pianist Bobby Timmons, quoted in Joe Goldberg's *Jazz Masters of the 50s* (Da Capo Press): "He builds leaders. He's a leader who builds leaders... You learn decorum with him, and how to be a man... He believes that jazz is feeling, the same as I do. But he knows about music."

Bobby Watson's feeling was that while he brought into the Messengers his own technique, creative intuition and his very own ears, he still had to fit in with the Blakey style. "But the man's a teacher," he said. "He certainly did make me slow down; then he made me put everything together in a more relaxed way, consider what I had in terms of ideas, and deliver them consistently. He showed us all by his own playing that it's possible to maintain a high standard despite all the difficulties of being on the road."

When Blakey stirs the pots behind his Messengers, said Bobby, it is a mistake to imagine he is merely supplying the propulsion. "He is also communicating; there are certain things he plays, little licks, that mean something. To his players he is talking in code."

"There's a certain thing he plays to let you know he thinks you have been soloing for too long. But when you hear that, it's not an absolute order; if you think—'Well, OK, I'm going to take another chorus anyway'—he accepts that you will carry on. It's a sort of conversation rather than the leader giving orders. Through this means, he shows you how to build your solos. He gave me a lot of guidance: I would say that working with Art and learning from him saved me at least ten years."

During his time with Blakey, Bobby Watson shared the stand with others who have since become known to a greater or lesser degree—trumpeters Wynton Marsalis, Valeri Ponomarev and Johnny Coles, reedmen Dave

a young lion roars

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B O B B Y W A T S O N

Schnitzer and Bill Pierce, pianist Mulgrew Miller. All have left, and their leaving has been as much a part of the master-plan as their joining. Bobby said: "We had discussed it; then the day came when he said - 'Hey man, I think it's time for you to go.'"

"By that time, he knew pretty well what I was about, what I could do. And he'd shown me this too. I loved Art and he loved me, we could have said - 'Let's carry on playing like this for ever.' But that's not what he is about. He is about giving as many young people as possible a chance, before he has to hang up his drums."

"So Art told me - 'When you leave, go form a band!' So that's what I did. I was suddenly out on my own, but I had to keep that momentum going. You can't sit back and wait for the phone to ring. I started writing, hard, and two weeks later I was rehearsing my own band. I had to keep pushing forward with the spirit that Art gave me, the spirit he carries round with him, which is his ability to make people happy."

No matter what has been said and written of Art Blakey's truculence and mischievousness, his young alumni venerate him utterly. To have been "a Messenger" is to carry a special accolade, but it is also to be categorised to a certain extent. Bobby Watson has gone out of his way since then to dispel this, hence his tendency to turn up on the stand in company of such baffling variety.

He was early on spotted by George Coleman, and still plays with the great tenor-piano octet on the rare occasions it is brought together. Bobby's own band which he formed weeks after leaving Blakey was a

quartet with Mulgrew Miller (piano), Curtis Lundy (bass) and Kenny Washington (drums). Lundy is, in fact, a long-time associate of Bobby's since their days at the University of Miami; shortly after they formed their quartet they were getting gigs in New York, and in 1963 they recorded an album which includes five original pieces by Watson as well as compositions by Lundy and Gigi Gryce. This is now available in Britain (Beatitudes, HEP 2024). In the same month of April 1963, the Watson quartet - with a change of drummer to Marvin "Smitty" Smith - expanded to a sextet by adding Steve Nelson on vibes and the veteran percussionist Dom um Romao to record *Jewel* for the Amigo label (AMLP 846).

BUT BOBBY has also been working with big bands - the Angel Angelo-Jimmy Madison orchestra and Charlie Persip's Superband - producing orchestrations as well as playing. Then there is the amazing 25th Street Saxophone Quartet. But perhaps the most unexpected manifestation of the Watson versatility has been his appearances and recording with Panama Francis and the Savoy Sultans (*Everything Swings*, Stash ST 233). How on earth did Bobby - circular breathing, cadence-cal Bobby - manage to infiltrate a ten-piece band of veterans playing "Slomping at the Savoy" and "Just You, Just Me"?

"Panama heard me playing lead alto with the Angelo-Madison band at the Blue Note. I like playing lead alto, but I think he was surprised to hear a young guy like me play in that style. He called me up and the next thing I knew I found myself playing second alto in the

Savoy Sultans, beside Howard Johnson!" (Johnson played with the Teddy Hill orchestra in the mid-1930s, and with the Dizzy Gillespie Big Band a decade later.) When Howard took ill, Bobby took over as lead alto to play with the Sultans at the Rainbow Room. The Stash album, recorded in October 1963, finds Bobby comfortably wrapping himself in the band's authentic swing-style sound, playing blues-inflected solos straight down the middle.

Musical schizophrenia? Is it really possible to cross such stylistic barriers instantaneously? The intonation, phrasing and harmonic approach Bobby uses with, say, the 25th Street Saxophone Quartet would shock out like a sore thumb in the Sultans. He said: "It's a funny thing, but when I'm playing with the Sultans, their music is all I hear, y'know? I love that music and I want to do it justice."

"Going back to Art Blakey, he showed me how to accept my surroundings. It's the same thing in life; some people want to impose their personality on everything else. People say about Americans that they want to make every place America! But I've learned to say, 'Hey man, what's happening here? Let me feel what it's like!'"

There is, of course, some crossover in Bobby Watson's music. The Saxophone Quartet, for example, plays an arrangement of "One O'Clock Jump" among other swing era numbers; and the Panama Francis album *Everything Swings* has a reading of "Take the A Train" in which the alto saxophone solo sounds - well, as if the late Johnny Hodges had been listening to the late Eric Dolphy.

But it was just our Bobby, pushing the icons around a little. ●

continued from page 33

1984: STILL FRESH AS TOMORROW

The New York Scene (Concord CJ 256)
Recorded: New York, May 1984.

Oh By The Way, Ballad Medley, Controversy, Tenderly, Falafel.
Terrance Blanchard (t); Jean Toussaint (ts); Donald Harrison (as); Mulgrew Miller (p); Lonnie Plaxico (b); Blakey (d).

SINCE WYNTON Marsalis replaced Valery Ponomarev in 1980, the fortunes of the Jazz Messengers, sadly flagging in the seventies, were revived. Significantly, Marsalis and the other young musicians Blakey chose to surround himself with were more conscious than ever of the spiritual link between bebop and their Afro-American heritage. Their presentation was uncompromising and professional; the band turned out in immaculate lounge suits (the seventies had brought casual, almost flashy stage wear) and all were committed to their leader's ideal of exposing jazz as an art form.

When Marsalis became musical director he sought a more fluid rhythmic motion, particularly during solo passages, that harked back to Miles' last acoustic quartet; surprisingly, Blakey slowly fine-tuned his playing to accommodate him. It was not the first time he had altered his style; with the success of "Moanin'" in the late fifties he increasingly relied on the backbeat as an inspirational tool - now the young bloods wanted to dissipate its dominating effect.

When in March 1982 Terence Blanchard replaced Marsalis, he too assumed the musical direction of the band and continued the rhythmic belt loosening. His influence was not as immediate as his predecessor, but by 1984 with the recording of *New York Scene* it was clear that this particular version of the Messengers had developed beyond the sum of its individual members, and had reached a plateau of excellence reserved for the very best of Blakey's outfits.

The tradition of past bands was respected - the driving writing of Horace Silver and the soulful mould of Bobby Timmons - but was sheathed in carefully constructed, fresh, original material. Crucial to this "new" Messengers sound is the role of Lonnie Plaxico on bass, who exceeds the usual role of rock-solid timekeeper normally associated with Blakey. Plaxico throws in melodic ideas, rhythmic ideas (sometimes opposing the drums polyrhythmically) and joins an ensemble figures.

"Oh By The Way", a Blanchard original, is the best recorded example of state-of-art Blakey, and is worth close attention. A looping 6/8 figure in the minor is stated by the bass against a legato theme that is varied and intensified by the front line. It is contrasted by a staccato release in the major by the horns over a brisk 4/4 and returns to the minor 6/8 strain. During the theme statement every melodic instrument has been used as a voicing possibility, closed sound (unison and octaves) and open sound (thirds, fifths, sixths etc. and triadic structures) have been contrasted for dynamic effect and opposing lines for horns and rhythm section have created a polyrhythmic undercurrent.

This, coupled with the obvious but satisfying

tension and release from moving from minor to major, creates a performance of convincing duality. Blanchard and Jean Toussaint soar and frequently it is Plaxico calling the rhythmic shots - breaking out of the close order pulse by sprinting into double time just before the backbeat can harm in the soloists. Blakey's playing seems rejuvenated, and freedom from the constant pressure of thrusting his soloists forward has replaced cliché with content.

"Controversy" is brash, exhilarating and modal - written by altist Donald Harrison, who is developing an angular, oblique introspection which he contrasts with headlong, petulant flurries "Falafel" is by pianist Mulgrew Miller, who consistently shines throughout - his generous ensemble work contrasted by glistering solos. Also featured is Jean Toussaint, who is given slightly more elbow room here to display a cerebral craftiness that almost obscures an original tenor voice. "Tenderly" features Blanchard, who despite the shadow cast by his distinguished predecessor is very much his own man - in fact the antithesis of Marsalis. He has a flugel-like tone that is happiest in the middle register whilst Marsalis has a fluting edge that has access to all registers; Blanchard favours long legato runs while Marsalis emphasises his line with ferocious tonguing and half-value effects.

Both have the potential of raising the profile of jazz itself - and it's a tribute to Blakey's self-appointed mission to provide a context for such talent to flourish. It could be the eighties are seen to be the golden period in the history of the Messengers - certainly New York Scene ranks among the best of Blakey's recorded output.

Stuart Nicholson



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**hank
mobley**

**a roll call
for the
ROUND
SOUND**

**BRIAN CASE pays
tribute to the gentle
tenorman who lost out in
the saxophone hall of fame.**

L EONARD FEATHER calls Hank Mobley "the middleweight champion of the tenor saxophone". John Litweiler compares him to Beethoven inasmuch as he finds "no place for cheapness" in his work, while Larry Kart views Mobley's oeuvre as enigmatic, paradoxical, and cites Nietzsche. Actually, unlucky is the word that springs most readily to mind.

Jazz tastes place an unfair emphasis on innovation and the striking tone. Mobley, neither an innovator nor possessed of an immediately grabbing sound, had the bad luck to attain the perfect expression of his gifts at a time when Coltrane and Rollins were changing the course of saxophone history. One is tempted to connect his disastrous


involvement with drugs — prison for a year in 1958 and 1964 — with a galling sense of eclipse. "You have to be an extrovert to stay up front," he told *Melody Maker* in 1966, "and I'm an introvert for most of the time."

Hank Mobley was born in Georgia in 1930 and raised in New Jersey. After an apprenticeship with Max Roach, Tadd Dameron and Dizzy Gillespie, he came to musical maturity around the mid-'50s in the high-water mark of Hard Bop — something of a portmanteau category, clearly, since his even urgency and serpentine lines had more in common with Don Byas or Wardell Gray. Like Donald Byrd, he was over-recorded during the first LP boom, and later saddled with the soul-funk-boogaloo pressures that set in at Blue Note after the success of *The*

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hank mobley

Sidewinder, but, nevertheless, his best work occurs piecemeal throughout his career with the integral exception of the three sessions usually cited as his personal pinnacle, *Roll Cell, Soul Station* and *Workout*.

In the Fifties, Mobley's main associations were with Horace Silver and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. In the early part of the next decade, he played with Miles Davis, and co-lead several small combos with Lee Morgan, Kenny Dorham and Cedar Walton thereafter. A fairly representative idea of his work for other leaders can be gained by listening to "Hankerin'" (*Horace Silver & The Jazz Messengers*), "Hank's Tune" (*Silver's Blue*) and "My One And Only Love" (*The Stylings Of Silver*), "The Theme" (*The Jazz Messengers At The Cafe Bohemia*), "M&M" and "Hi Fly" (*The Jazz Messengers At The Jazz Corner Of The World*), albums which cover each of his two sojourns with the unit; "Walkin'" and "Fren Dance" (*Miles Davis In Person: Friday & Saturday Nights*).

The rough 'n' tumble of the blowing session seldom encouraged his best work. "If you play next to Johnny Griffin or Coltrane, that's hard work. You have to out-psyche them. They'd say, let's play Cherokee. I'd go no, no - ah, how about Bye Bye Blackbird? I put my heavy form on them, then I can double up and do everything I want to do." If he was referring to Griffin's *A Blowing Session*, he patently did not get his way, since the leader's choice of tempos saw everybody off.

The Tristano school of saxophonists have, at various times, theorized about the aesthetic advantages of an anonymous tone. Expressionism need have no place in

improvised music: it detracts from the purity of the line, and distracts the ear from the intellectual process onto the psychological. There is no evidence to suggest that Mobley subscribed to this view. What he was aiming at was "not a big sound, not a small sound, but a round sound", and, besides, his choice of drummers (usually Blakey) was considerably more interventionist than the time-keepers of the Tristano mode. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which a solo by Mobley, like a solo by Warne Marsh, requires special circumstances and a rare equilibrium to come off, and both musicians demand close attention if their subtleties are to be communicated. Mobley's association with Hard Bop is both relevant and a red herring.

HIS RHYTHMIC mastery is his strongest card. Some idea of his idiosyncratic and often understated relationship to the beat - and the difficulties inherent in his concept - will be gathered by listening to "This I Dig Of You" (*Soul Station*), "My Groove Your Move" (*Roll Cell*), "Smokin'" (*Workout*), or "East Of The Village", a 6/8 outing (*The Turnaround*). His phrase shapes and the odd logic which links them arrive miraculously on time, and yet his delivery does not draw attention to a process which is, in effect, an on-going cliff-hanger. Nonchalance - hardly a Hard Bop characteristic - is the key note.

Recent years have seen a flood of Mobley Blue Notes which, for various reasons, were not released in context. None of them threatens to unseat the great trilogy of the early '60s, but all contain breathtaking moments when everything came together.

"Poppin'" from 1957 gives an idea of just how much further ahead the leader was than Art Farmer or Pepper Adams, and the track "East Of Brooklyn" - like "Lull In My Life" from *A Slice Of The Top* (1966) - matches the clear window of his tone to a perfectly pretty view. The two latest undiscovered Mobley recordings, *Far Away Lands* and *Lee Morgan's The Rehearsal*, are difficult to choose between for excellent moments.

His numerous compositions have been intelligent end workmanlike rather than inspired, though his improvisations on them have often been all three. Influenced, though not drowned, by Coltrane from the late '50s, his own obliquity can still be detected in the work of Wayne Shorter and Ronnie Scott, the musicians' musicians.

He moved to Europe from 1968-70, starting out at the Chat Qui Pêche in Paris with Slide Hampton, and turning up very much off-form on his friend Archie Shepp's session, *Poem For Malcolm*. By 1975 he had moved to Philadelphia, and reports of ill health filtered into the jazz magazines. By the end of the decade, Mobley was an invalid, unable to play his saxophone.

"The doctor told me not to play it, or I might blow one of my lungs out. It's hard for me to think of what could be and what should have been. I lived with Charlie Parker, Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk; I walked with them up and down the street. I did not know what it meant when I listened to them cry - until it happened to me."

"None of us," he told *Melody Maker* back in 1968, "are completed." It turned out to be prophetic for Hank Mobley. ●

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From the turntable of Chris Parker.

PLAYLIST



SOUND CHECK

HONKERS, SHOUTERS, GRITS AND SOUL

NICK KIMBERLEY visits the Kingdom of old funk, rhythm, blues.....

CINCINNATI DOESN'T seem destined to take its place alongside New Orleans, Kansas City, Chicago, the great cities of our musical fantasies. It's simply a Midwest steel town with lots of railway lines. But that's the key: with a large working class and a pivotal position as a way-station between South and North, Cincinnati has all the ingredients to work its way into any musical atlas. And for a quarter of a century, that's what it did, as the home of King Records, one of the great postwar "indies" at the heart of American music.

Thanks to a leasing deal signed by Charly Records, European listeners will soon have large portions of the King catalogue available again. According to Cliff White, who's coordinating the King reissues, Charly is thinking in terms of some 125 LPs over the next five years.

Founded in 1944 by Syd Nathan, King initially catered for Cincinnati's large blue collar audience for white country music — Moon Mullican, the Delmore Brothers, Hawkshaw Hawkins. But Cincinnati also had a large black population (and its own Cotton Club), and Nathan quickly instituted the Queen label for black music. Queen's first hit, in 1947, was Bull Moose Jackson's "I Love You, Yes I Do". When Nathan bought out the New Jersey label Deluxe, he also had access to Roy Brown's hugely popular blues and rhythm hits. In 1950, he started another r&b label, Federal Queen and Deluxe were phased out, while King/Federal forged ahead.

Unusually, black artists were encouraged to record songs written by King's country singers, and vice versa. It was in Nathan's interests to encourage cross-pollination: he published most of the material his artists composed, and even carved himself a portion of composer royalties (usually under the pseudonyms of Lois Man or Sally Nix). His financial juggling suggested musical possibilities taken up nearly a decade later by both black and white rock'n'rollers.

Nathan's tight hold on royalties typified his business approach. Hardnosed to a degree, he was, in Arnold Shaw's admiring phrase from *Honkers and Shouters*, "one of the Henry Fords of the record industry". He not only handed out key executive jobs to members of

his family, but also turned King into a self-contained indie, with recording studios, mastering and pressing facilities, and a press for printing LP covers. Family links even gave him some control over his artists' management, and a booking agency which found them work. Small wonder that some people later complained that Sydney exploited them.

Much of King's success was due to the men Nathan employed to run the musical side of his business, producers like Gene Redd and Hal Neely, and especially A&R man Henry Glover, who joined the label in 1947 after working as an arranger with the Lucky Millinder orchestra. For the next ten years, Glover coordinated dozens of sessions for King's artists, black and white, as well as writing some of r&b's most lasting hits.

Equally important in the backroom was Ralph Bass, a white producer who worked in bebop in the Forties before turning to r&b production. As West Coast A&R man for New York's Savoy Records, he worked largely with Johnny Otis. In 1950, he joined Nathan, apparently bullying his way into a deal which gave him not only extra royalties but also his own label to play with, Federal. To hear him tell it in various interviews, you'd imagine that Bass was personally responsible for every major hit, every major change in black music throughout the Fifties, and on into the Sixties, when he worked for the Chess brothers in Chicago.

The self-aggrandisement doesn't conceal the fact that Bass made many good records, rarely bowing to pressure to soften the product for white audiences. In 1955 he pulled off the coup which, paradoxically, both made and broke King Records. He was responsible for the first session by the Famous Flames, which produced "Please Please Please", an emotional record occupying a middle ground between r&b, gospel and doowop. Lead singer James Brown pleaded his way into musical history, in the process laying a solid foundation for his own superstar status, and for the musical changes that led to soul music in the Sixties.

Over the next fifteen years (except for a brief spell with Smash Records, when Nathan wouldn't meet all his demands), Brown was easily King's most successful performer. To begin with, he recorded in whatever style might be popular, but he quickly developed his own unique funk apparatus, bringing international success to Nathan's previously parochial concern.

But that success coincided with Nathan's failing health. He was apparently quite happy to let Brown carry the label. Cliff White says that by the Sixties, three-quarters of the music

King recorded was by James Brown, or associated with him — "King was virtually a marketing company for James". What was once a varied label roster became a one-man show — successful, but not successful enough. When Nathan died in the late Sixties, the label, after changing hands several times, quickly became a packaging company for its own past.

James Brown long ago moved on to even greater things. His phenomenal success enabled him to write his own contract with King (which must have annoyed Syd), and he still owns all the tracks he recorded, and most of those he produced for the label. Charly only has a handful of JB productions to choose from, but isn't complaining: the rest of the archive is vast enough for the foreseeable future.

Charly's first twelve LPs from King have just appeared, all by black artists and focusing primarily on the Forties and Fifties, when the label recorded across the whole spectrum of popular styles. Black acts were far more successful for the label than white. Roy Brown, Earl Bostic, Willie John, Bill Doggett and James Brown all earned gold discs. Rock 'n' roll took its toll on King's success, but the label had enough acts to survive the onslaught, even if some of its most talented performers were displaced by the music they'd helped to create.

The records' informative sleeve notes are, in one way, a depressing read. They show how many of these singers were casualties of their own success. Little Willie John, a self-destructive thug by all accounts, was convicted of manslaughter and died in prison, aged only 31. Little Esther grew up with serious drug problems, and died in 1964 when she was 48. The Dominoes' two spectacular lead singers, Clyde McPhatter and Jackie Wilson, both died in sad circumstances, McPhatter in 1972 (age 39), while Wilson died in 1984 after spending eight years in a coma. Roy Brown, Wynonie Harris and Tiny Bradshaw all died in obscurity, and only Johnny "Guitar" Watson seems likely to play any active part in modern music. Even he has his doubts: his latest LP is called *Strike On Computers*.

The music in contrast is full of pleasures joyously taken. The boundless energy of Tiny Bradshaw's seven- or eight-piece band on *Breakin' Up The House* gives the impression of a much larger orchestra. Tiny's cheerful voice brings to mind Cab Calloway and, particularly, Louis Jordan, although he was never as popular as either.

▲ Little Esther

► Mighty, mighty Roy Brown



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Wynonie Harris' *Rock Mr Blues* dates from the same era, late Forties/early Fifties. Harris had been a dancer and comedian in black vaudeville before turning blues shouter in the Kansas City style of Jimmy Rushing and Joe Turner. Wynonie was always buoyant, even when confronting the judiciary ("Good Morning Judge"), but the boozey and bawdy good times which preoccupied him meant little to rock'n'roll audiences.

Ray Brown was another shouter, but less arrogant, more emotional: his voice cried *Boogie at Midnight* covers his career from 1947-59, including the early Deluxe sides whose traces of gospel hysteria had such an impact on later singers, from BB King to Little Richard to James Brown.

When **Little Esther** (Phillips) made her first records with the Johnny Otis orchestra, she was not yet fifteen years old. She was still a teenager when she began recording for King in 1951, but the performances on *Bad Bled Girl* are fully-fledged r&b, her straining vocals more arresting than her later records: listen to the poignant cameo of adulterous love on "Saturday Night Baby".

Amongst the vocal groups represented, **The Dominoes** and **The Five Royales** produced records on which later styles pivoted. Clyde

McPhatter's extraordinary high tenor dominates *Have Mercy Baby*, introducing a level of emotion scarcely equalled before or since. When he left, his place was taken by Jackie Wilson, whose 1954 performance of "Outskirts of Town" reveals the sobbing intensity which made him such a great soul singer. **The Five Royales'** *The Roots of Soul* is less prodigious, but under Lowman Pauling's leadership the group borrowed even more directly from gospel than the Dominoes. Pauling's fluid guitar was an unusual and imaginative foil to the vocals.

Hank Ballard and the Midnighters took up where the Dominoes and Royales left off. *What You Get When The Gettin' Gets Good* shows that Hank's angelic face concealed a tough voice. He was happy with dance records (the Midnighters' original version of "The Twist" was lifted en masse by Chubby Checker), but sounded better on slow tracks, under-represented here: "Teardrops on Your Letter" is utterly moving. Between 1954 and 1980, Ballard was one of black music's most popular acts, but got left behind by soul music, despite occasional links with James Brown.

The same period saw the astonishing success of **Little Willie John**, who might have eclipsed both Sam Cooke and James Brown if

his violent disposition hadn't put paid to him. *Grits and Soul* reminds us of the impact his young, confident voice had: many of these tracks became part of soul music's common property.

Johnny "Guitar" Watson and **Freddy King** represent two sides of the modern blues guitar tradition: Johnny bresh, extravagant, Freddy more restrained but equally intense. *I Heard That* also includes some tracks with Johnny on piano, his first instrument, but for all their appeal, these orthodox blues are thoroughly eclipsed by the vulgarity of "Specie Guitar". Recorded in the Sixties, King's *Takin' Care of Business* showcases some of the last great blues recorded in the Chicago style (although Freddy recorded in Cincinnati), the sheer simplicity of Sonny Thompson's arrangements allowing a wide emotional range.

Lastly, the series includes two LPs by King's most popular instrumentalists, **Bill Doggett** (Gon' Doggett) and **Earl Bostic** (*Blows a Fuse*). Bostic's alto pared down pop inventiveness and put it in a pop framework, with great success. His band included many talented musicians through the Forties and Fifties, when dozens of Bostic LPs testified to his popularity with black audiences. Doggett played with Louis Jordan and Lucky Millinder before "Honky Tonk" brought him a multi-million seller in his own name in 1958. Doggett's organ playing was one of the foundations of Sixties funk: minimal but rhythmic, it still summons an enormous appeal.

These twelve LPs give an idea of the music that put Cincinnati on the map. With plenty of rockabilly, country and gospel (black and white) up its sleeve, Cherry looks set to revive King's fortunes, years after the label ceased to mean anything to record buyers.

Nick Kimberley

BUD SHANK
Live at 'The Haig'
(Concept VL2)
Recorded: 'The Haig', Los Angeles - January 1956.
How About You?
Loverman; Ambassador
Blues; I Heard You Cried
Last Night; Out of This
World-1; Miles Signs Off
Shank (alt, fl-1); Claude
Williamson (p); Don Prell
(bs); Chuck Flores (d).

THOUGH DUKE Ellington made the first experimental jazz recordings of this kind in the 1930s, much has been made of the fact that the above session was taken down in stereo. True, stereo was not commercially available in the mid-1950s and the group sound is uncommonly vivid for the period, with good separation between the constituent parts. The chief point, however, is the vitality of Shank's musical thinking here, and neither his very smooth tone nor his extreme facility of movement should deafen us to the strong emotional current of his improvising, on "Miles Signs Off", for instance. In "How About You?" the invention is tightly packed, and not just because of the very fast tempo, the speedy yet more relaxed "I Heard You Cried" being just as impressive in this respect.

◀ The Five Royales



Williamson is always, and reasonably, spoken of as a Bud Powell disciple, but he shows more individuality here than on many of his studio recordings. In "Loverman" he and the elite spin long, highly unpredictable lines, shifting in and out of double-time with complete fluency. As Shank says in the sleeve notes, bop was then reasserting itself as an influence. "Out of This World" does not efface memories of Chris Connor's recording (Affinity AFF122), but offers our only chance of hearing the leader's flute on this LP.

"Ambassador Blues" affirmed the music's roots a few years before such affirmations became fashionable. We hardly expect such musicians to excel in blues, yet they do; and Shank's avoidance of that idiom's clichés is particularly engaging.

No doubt "Ambassador Blues" was named after the Ambassador Hotel on Wilshire Boulevard opposite "The Haig", where these recordings were made. Besides this Shank group, the quartets of Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker and Laurindo Almeida all started there, and Konitz, Giuffrè, Rogers, Garner, Brookmeyer, Getz, Edison, Hawes and Norvo were among others who played at "The Haig" during the tiny establishment's half-a-dozen golden years (1951-56). Long since bulldozed, it was one block down from the "Brown Derby", and... I'm sorry. They say "old men forget", but, dammit, let's not true it at all.

Max Harrison

THE IMPULSE REISSUES

QUINCY JONES

The Quintessence
(Impulse AS11)

Recorded: New York City – November 11 1961.

The Twitch; For Lena and Lennie

Jerome Kall, Clyde Reasinger, Clark Terry, Joe Newman (t); Melba Liston, Billy Byers, Paul Faulstich (tb); Julius Watkins (fr h); Phil Woods, Eric Dixon, Jerome Richardson (saxes); Bobby Scott (p); George Catlett (b); Stu Martin (d); Jones (arr, dir).

Recorded: New York City – December 18 1961.

Hard Sock Dance; Little Karen; Robot Portrait
Thad Jones, Al de Risi, Freddie Hubbard, Snooky Young (t); Patricia Bown (p); Milt Hinton (b); Bill English (d) replace Kall, Reasinger, Terry, Newman, Scott, Catlett, Martin. Rod Levitt (tb), Frank Wess, Oliver Nelson (saxes) added.

Recorded: New York City – December 22 1961.
Invitation; Straight, No Chaser; Quintessence
Newman, Ernie Royal (t), Curtis Fuller (tb), James Johnson (d) replace de Risi, Hubbard, Levitt, English. Thomas Mitchell (tb), James Buffington, Earl Chapin, Ray Alonge (fr h), Harvey Phillips

(tu), Gloria Agostini (harp) added. Wess, Dixon absent.

JONES IS that saddest of figures in the arts, the impeccably accomplished craftsman who has nothing to say. The most critical listening can uncover no technical weakness in these eight magnificently played and superbly recorded scores, but they contain absolutely nothing that was – as of 1961 – in any way new. Evidently Jones had no fresh experience to communicate. Nor did this disc mark an advance on earlier outings of his such as the tedious *This Is How I Feel About Jazz LP* (1956). He was wise to retreat into the "Smackwater Jack" territory. There is beautiful improvising by Woods on "Invitation" and especially "Quintessence" (he did have new thoughts to convey), and there are respectable solos from others – Hubbard, for example, in "Portrait". The one classic theme here, Monk's "Straight" blues, is, revealingly, made to sound trivial. And at 30' 24" the playing-time is short.

Max Harrison

PHAROAH SANDERS



Tauhid

(Impulse AS-9138)

Upper Egypt And Lower Egypt, Japan, Aum/Venus/Capricorn Rising.

Sanders (ts, f), Dave Burrell (p), Sonny Sharrock (g), Nat Bettis (b), Roger Blank (d).

Thembi

(Impulse AS-9206)

Recorded: Los Angeles, 25 November 1970/New York 12 January 1971.

Astral Travelling, Red, Black & Green, Thembi, Love, Morning Prayer, Ballophone Dance.

Side One: Sanders (ts, ss, bells, perc), Michael White (vln, perc), Lonnie Liston Smith (p, e-p, perc), Cecil McBee (b, perc), Clifford Jarvis (d, perc), James Jordan (cymbals).

Side Two: Roy Haynes (d) replaces Jarvis, Chief Bey, Majid Shabazz, Anthony Wiles and Nat Bettis (perc) added, White absent.

Black Unity
(Impulse AS-9219)

Recorded: New York 1971.

Black Unity (Parts I & II).
Sanders (ts, ballophone), Marvin Peterson (t), Carlos Garnett (ts), Joe Bonner (p), Cecil McBee, Stanley Clarke (b), Norman Connors, William Hart, Lawrence Killian (d, perc).

PHAROAH'S PONDEROUSLY spiritual records have stood time's test rather poorly. There are some uplifting moments on all three of these reissues, but it can seem like dredging through mud to find the odd piece of shiny glass. *Tauhid* was his first album after leaving Coltrane, and it rambles in a way that suggests he was stuck for what to do next. So goes "Upper Egypt And Lower Egypt", where almost nothing happens for the first quarter-hour: then Sanders stretches mightily for a couple of minutes, and it's over. "Japan" is a feeble little trinket.

Thembi is more varied and eventful. Smith contributes a wavering pestle piece in "Astral Travelling", and it's a bit of a shock when the sore-pawed catharsis of "Red, Black And Green" starts up – howling tenor and scrawling violin, though this doesn't challenge memories of Albert Ayler and Michael Sampson. After Cecil McBee's "Love" bass solo, the ripple of kotos and ballophones sustains the rest of the side. This is doody music.

Just because Ascension had said it all already didn't mean Sanders wasn't going to have another go at the edifice-of-sound exorcism bag. *Black Unity* was the result, and it's actually the most clear-headed of the three records because its enactment of violence is so single-minded. No shirking here: everybody stomps relentlessly on the spot. And it's actually quite good fun, especially at the moments when Garnett, Sanders and Peterson lock horns and the whole mass of the sound lunges for the ceiling, if not quite the sky. When the horns lay out in part two, there's even some funky steps by the rhythm section. Worth having to remember a great desperado of Freedom at his most wittily energetic.

Richard Cook

THE BLUE NOTE REISSUES

MILES DAVIS

Volume 2

(Blue Note BST 81502)

Recorded: May 9, 1952 (A); April 20, 1953 (B); March 6, 1954 (C).

Take Off (C); Weirde (C); Would'n You (A); I Waited For You (B); Ray's Idea (B); Donna (A); Well You Needn't (C); The Leap (C); Lazy Susan (C); Tempus Fugit (B); It Never Entered My Mind (C).

(A) Miles Davis (tp); Jay Jay Johnson (tbn); Jackie McLean (as); Gil Coggins (p); Oscar Pettiford (b); Kenny Clarke (d).

(B) Davis, Johnson, Coggins as (A); Jimmy Heath (ts); Percy Heath (b); Art Blakey (d)
(C) Davis, Heath P., Blakey as (B); Horace Silver (p).

THELONIOUS MONK

Genius of Modern Music

(Blue Note BST 81511)

Caroline Moon (D); Hornin' In (D); Skippy (D); Let's Cool It (D); Suburban Eyes (C); Evonce (C); Straight No Chaser (E); Four In One (E); Nice Work (B); Monk's Mood (A); Who Knows (A); Ask Me Now (E).

(A) George Tait (tp); Shihb Shihab (as); Monk (p); Robert Paige (b); Art Blakey (d).

(B) Monk, Blakey as (A); Gene Ramey (b).

(C) Monk, Blakey, Ramey as (B); Idries Sullman (tp); Danny Quebec West (as); Billy Smith (ts).

(D) Kenny Dorham (tp); Lou Donaldson (as); Lucky Thompson (ts); Monk (p); Nelson Boyd (b); Max Roach (d).

(E) Shihab, Monk, Blakey as (A); Milt Jackson (vibes); Al McKibbin (b).

MCCOY TYNER

Tender Moments

(Blue Note BST 84275)

Recorded: 1968

Mode To John; Man From Tanganyika; The High Priest; Utopia; All My Yesterdays; Lee Plus Three. Lee Morgan (tp); Julius Priestner (tb); James Spaulding (as, f); Bennie Maupin (ts); Bob Northern (fr h); Howard Johnson (tu); McCoy Tyner (p); Herbie Lewis (b); Joe Chambers (d).

Devis: snipped on the move (but when wasn't he?); after scratching odd angles into Parker's whipped curlicue of sound, he'd birthed the Cool. These Blue Note mugshots are blurred, by compulsion. He plays with a mind-turned edginess, often brutally self-absorbed, fascinating, evil. The '52 vintage has a dark bronze luster, Davis desperately in control of himself. The '53's more open, "Tempus Fugit" flying along, and "Ray's Idea" probably the most lively snatch on offer. The '54's cold and difficult, with the Rhythm keeping their distance, providing him with an expert groove, but as if they're all the time waiting for him to return to the land of the living, while he plays in his own darkness, facing away from the world. And slowly, something seems to light up through them, until "Lazy Susan" is warmth and golden morning, compared. Which is all very subjective, when we consider the order of songs might all be down to Blue Note's after-the-fact programming. ("Well You Needn't" starts halfway through the first bar in my copy. Disco Remix, boys?)

The Fox knows many things. The Hedgehog knows one big thing. If Miles is a

fox, Monk's a hedgehog. His music always seems in perfect repose (on the other hand, round this date, his sleeve note writers always seem on a flustered defensive). Considering this, and how much great jazz has been worked through in his name (Coltrane, A., Taylor C., Lucy S. — you could while away a life just casing these minor figures), there's still a glistening freshness to his playing. Mannered, odd, deliberate: concentrated, acid, economical. No, he hasn't been absorbed or neutralised. Because there's whole worlds to mine, still. And he can still pull you up mid-stride, wither complacency, evenom sentimentality. And yet there's a liquid, velvety beauty in the "Caroline Moon" session. Elsewhere he draws out a wry sharpness from his sidemen, West and Sullman especially. "Four In One" has a lunatic cast that one could wish had infected the MJQ a little more often, so well does Milt Jackson sound this way.

To Tyner, and halfway to today. On the whole, the Monster and his Men haven't wheedled their way into my listening habits. Because, I suppose. He requires too much commitment when he's flying high, and when he isn't, he's too interested in things that pass me by, modes and God and stuff. I can appreciate Tyner's work for him, the Old shaped just so, so Jones and Coltrane could explode off into the New. But, like too many of the Fifties pianists, sideman-duty's discipline has dried him up inside a little. So he coaxes nice brass sounds, for a first outing as an orchestral leader, and gives his unit clarity and shapes to suit them. But he needs someone to drive him to the edge, something to set off. Towards the end of side two, "All My Yesterdays" luxuriates in a sinful melancholy, and "Lee Plus Three" holds out just long enough for Morgan's entry to raise a grin. Elsewhere, a crisp intensity, some sharp moments, and no risk of unseemly response, alas.

Mark Sinker

DEXTER GORDON

Doin' Allright

(Blue Note BST 80447)

Recorded: Englewood Cliffs — 1961.

I Was Doing All Right, You've Changed, For Regulars Only, Society Red, It's You Or No One.

Dexter Gordon (ts); Freddie Hubbard (t); Horace Parlan (p); George Tucker (b); Al Harewood (d).

THIS WAS the LP that marked Dexter Gordon's comeback after a decade in the doldrums. One of bebop's premier tenor men, Gordon's star went into eclipse in the Fifties when Cool became the dominant jazz fashion, particularly in his California home base. Then too there were the ubiquitous "personal problems" which led to a spell in gaol and a decline in job offers. But a gig in the West Coast version of Jack Gelber's play *The Connection* began his rehabilitation and, heartened no doubt by the hard pop trend and the tenor revolutions of Coltrane and Rollins (both indebted to him), Gordon went back East to record for Blue Note in 1961.

Go! is probably his Blue Note masterpiece, but *Doin' Allright* is no small shakes either. In fact, the first side is practically flawless:

Gordon strolls through Gershwin's "I Was Doing All Right" with the easy sureness of a melder, blows immaculate tough-but-tender horn on a gorgeous "You've Changed" and leads the band from the front with a cooking solo on the uptempo clip of his own "For Regulars Only". Harewood and Tucker are solid and unobtrusive throughout, while Hubbard and Parlan offer brief, sympathetic support.

Side two is a step down from such excellence, if only because the relaxed, expansive funk of "Society Red" is allowed to lope on for too long, before the LP shuts up shop with a breezy sprint through "It's You Or No One". I'd much rather "Society Red" had been lightened up so Gordon had the time to blow another ballad — those lithe, snaking, melody lines are one of his great strengths — but *Doin' Allright* still has a goodly percentage of quintessential Dexter.

Graham Lock

JOHNNY GRIFFIN

Chicago Calling — Introducing Johnny Griffin (Blue Note BST 81533)

Recorded: 1956.

Mil Dew, Chicago Calling, These Foolish Things, The Boy Next Door, Nice And Easy, It's Alright With Me, Lover Man. Griffin (ts); Wynton Kelley (p); Curly Russell (b); Max Roach (d).

WE HAVE known this little master's playing so long that Griffin's drive and insatiability might seem commonplace today. But *Chicago Calling* packs a pulsing determination to swing. Seconds into "Mil Dew", the grinning demon in Griffin has taken hold: this is one of the most devastating arrivals on record, a headlong solo that climbs all over the tenor in four-bar bursts, steaming, stifling in its attack on every corner of the tune.

Most of the LP is like that. Griffin has never been any shakes as a thematic player; all his solos are escapades where one phrase is yesterday's news as soon as the next is under way. They hang together on that famously big-hearted tone, every note boomed out clear, each twist in the sound respectfully turned out. In "These Foolish Things" and surely the definitive version of "The Boy Next Door" he takes belated without tears, the melodies soaked in exaltation. The rhythm players? Max Roach bawls at him to slow down but stays perfectly in touch; Wynton Kelly has a fabulous moment when he picks out the coolest, calmest line imaginable following the leader's "Mil Dew" landslide. A superlative record.

Richard Cook

BUD POWELL

The Amazing Bud Powell

Volume 2

(Blue Note BST 81504)

Recorded: 9 August 1949, 1 May 1951, 14 August 1953. Reets And I, Autumn In New York, I Want To Be Happy, It Could Happen To You, Sure Thing, Polka Dots And Moonbeams, Glass Enclosure, Over The

Rainbow, Audrey, You Go To My Head, Ornithology. Powell (p); George Duvivier (b); Art Taylor (d). Tommy Potter & Roy Haynes play on final two tracks; Curly Russell & Max Roach on *It Could Happen To You*.



ALWAYS A haunted man, Bud seems more and more like a ghost. Phantasmal moaning accompanies his long, long flights (hear the matter-of-fact endings to most of these — Powell wasn't interested in rounding things off). His motion is the nervous scurrying of a soul that wants to stay in shadow. But Bud's urge to play always masters his fears — at least, it did then.

Volume One has some horn distractions; this one is all Powell. We're familiar with the shells of Broadway being shocked into new forms; yet was Ornette's "Embraceable You" any more merciless than Powell's wrestling of "I Want To Be Happy" and "It Could Happen To You"? These new emotional discoveries remain models of daring, 30 years on. In "Polka Dots And Moonbeams" he pieces a ballad together from decisive, glittering fragments. In "Glass Enclosure", an abstract, his touch is totally imperishable. Piano hasn't got much further than this.

Richard Cook

DONALD BYRD

Byrd In Hand (Blue Note BST 84019)
Recorded: 1959.
Witchcraft, Here Am I, Devil Whirl, Bronze Dance, Clarion Calls, The Injuns.
Donald Byrd (t); Charlie Rouse (ts); Pepper Adams (bar); Walter Davis Jr (p); Sam Jones (b); Art Taylor (d).



IN AN inauspicious record the most inventive music comes from Charlie Rouse. Byrd had an unassuming gift for the lyric touch that his hard boppy customarily obscures, and though all his solos are pretty, they're pretty short on memorability. Adams is a very curious case. Because he so curiously refuses the baritone's temptations — there is no recourse to the disturbing pathos of Chalfont, for instance — his playing is frosty and abrupt. The usual mid-tempo shorthend is the result.

Over the clean swing of the rhythm, Rouse plays some things to delight a tired ear. On Davis's tune "Bronze Dance" (pinched wholesale from "On Green Dolphin Street") there are all kinds of sneaks in the tenor, double-time retorts and a swing that's plain barrelhouse. "Witchcraft" has Rouse by turns leaning back on the beat and leaping away from it, a rocking balance very cleverly maintained. This is the intelligence that Monk must have heard when he hired Charlie.

Richard Cook

JIMMY SMITH

Houseparty (Blue Note BST 84002)
Au Private, Lover Man, Just Friends, Blues After All.
Lee Morgan (t); Curtis Fuller (tbn); George Coleman, Lou Donaldson (as); Tina Brooks (ts); Kenny Burrell, Eddie McFadden (g); Jimmy Smith (org); Art Blakey, Donald Bailey (d).

JIMMY SMITH's popularity in the fifties was such that he singlehandedly elevated the status of the Hammond B-2 organ from the "miscellaneous instrument" category to a separate section of its own in the annual *Downbeat* readers poll. I still treasure two or three original Blue Notes that feature his "Oklahoma funk", declaratory lines closer to wailing saxophone than to a piano keyboard. High on energy and excitement, they have made me a soft touch for more of the same.

House Party, however, is a disappointment. A mellow blow made up of scrag ends of several sessions, and since Smith left Blue Note in 1962 this 1967 release was clearly put together to trade on his massive popularity at the time. Lee Morgan features on three of the four tracks, but struggles like a fly in amber to cut loose from the cloying block chords. Whilst the results remain earthbound, it is not entirely Smith's fault. With two tracks that virtually take up the whole of either side, we are in blowing session territory, with soloists like George Coleman, Lou Donaldson and Kenny Burrell emerging and submerging like passengers from the *Titanic*. By the time everyone's turn has come around to solo they seem to have gone off the boil, and this particularly applies to Smith, whose comping mumbles and grumbles like a discontented old man.

With the gems Blue Note have got in their vaults, this is not a well chosen reissue — to make matters worse my "Direct Metal Mastering, Digitally Re-Mastered, Premium Quality Vinyl, European Pressing" has distortion in one or two sections.

Stuart Nicholson

HERBIE HANCOCK
Speak Like A Child (Blue Note BST 84279)

Recorded: New York, 6/9 March 1968.
Riot, Speak Like A Child, First Trip, Toys, Goodbye To Childhood, The Sorcerer.
Thad Jones (fl-h); Peter Phillips (bs-tbn); Jerry Dodgion (alt-f); Hancock (p); Ron Carter (b); Mickey Roker (d).

IT IS difficult to imagine that this album came immediately after Hancock's important *Maiden Voyage*. But then Hancock has always had a chameleon-like ability to immerse himself in someone else's bag — Gil Evans on *The Prisoner*, Sun Ra on *Sextant* and *Crossings* and of course Miles' sofisticated *Maiden Voyage* and *Empyrean Isles*. Hancock's Hancock bag on *Speak Like A Child*, however, is dull. He is like an actor without lines — bored clockwork piano-riote solos are sandwiched between intros and outros and none of the cast get a look in. Hancock speaks of creating "simple hummable melodies" in the liner notes, and "sacrificing the vertical for the horizontal". It's almost as if he's talking about *Maiden Voyage* — the melodies on *Speak Like A Child* are not particularly hummable and the harmonic motion seems to be from one pattern to another linked by rambling single note lines.

"Riot" had been previously recorded with Miles Davis, and as may be supposed is the least hummable of all the tracks. Paradoxically, the excellent re-mastering heightens the clinical effect of Hancock's neat and meticulous playing to lend an air of curious detachment. The title track and "Goodbye Childhood" are ballad performances of the sort you hear pushing the trolley around the supermarket. A bluesy "Toys" almost gets going, but who is Herbie here? Junior Mance. Les McCann or Billy Taylor?

Stuart Nicholson

LOU DONALDSON

Blues Walk (Blue Note BST 81593)
Recorded: New York, 28 July 1958.
Blues Walk, Move, The Masquerade Is Over, Play Ray, Autumn Nocturne, Callin' All Cats.
Donaldson (as); Herman Foster (p); Peck Morrison (b); Dave Bailey (d); Ray Barretto (cgas).

BLUE NOTE records have a cherisma — the Blue Note sound, the Blue Note groove and a stable of artists who through the fifties and early sixties could be relied upon for some of the most enjoyable, cooking and state-of-art sessions in jazz. Some albums were sought after simply because they swung like the clappers. They didn't have to be by first division artists; it was sufficient that they had what Miles Davis has called "that thing".

Blues Walk by Lou Donaldson is just such an album. It's one of the archetypal sessions from the fifties, high on swing and frequently generating a nice head of steam. Donaldson was a preaching alto saxist when this album was made, closer to mainstream than bop, who frequently cropped up on countless sessions for Blue Note; but he seldom played

as well as on this, his second album as a leader. Uncomplicated and logical, Donaldson relied on his powerful tone to carry the day. The inclusion of a conga player in a straight-ahead rhythm section normally reduces it to a three-legged race, but Ray Barretto actually gets under Dave Bailey's drums to combine into a formidably swinging boom. "Blues Walk", "Play Ray", "Celine All Cots" have stood the test of time – fresh today as when they were recorded an incredible 27 years ago. It may not be the most fashionable album in the world to admit liking, but I won't tell anyone if you won't.

Stuart Nicholson

JOHN COLTRANE

Africa/Brass

(Impulse AS-6)

Africa, Greensleeves, Blues Minor.

Coltrane (ts); McCoy Tyner (p); Jimmy Garrison (b); Elvin Jones (d). With orchestra conducted by Eric Dolphy.



THIS RECORD launched Coltrane's career on Impulse. And it's a classic. Of course. It's a record which arouses personal anecdotes and opinions from every jazz fan. I considered calling my jazz buff friends for quotes. What more can be said about a record like this which still shines 20 years after recording, and which has been written into every jazz history book?

Africa/Brass is one of those unique phenomena: a classic which has not softened or smoothed with the passage of time. It is still more challenging than most releases in the Jazz, Impulse, And... category today. As a greenhorn, Charlie Parker used to sound impenetrable and terrifyingly alien to me; today he is mellow and tuneful, singing, even. Coltrane still sounds dense and complex, only now his tenor solo makes me tingle and have the same kind of moving and soulful effect as say, Junior Walker had, those 20 years ago.

Africa/Brass is, for those who don't know, a record of the period when Coltrane was fascinated by folk music, particularly from Africa's Arabes, and India. "Africa", filling side one, is a fantastic journey, full of stirring, winding tenor tunes, a journey for Coltrane and his handpicked big band (trumpet, French horns, alto and baritone, euphoniums, two basses and tuba). It swings like a camel train in full stride, allowing the soloists their turn out front, with occasional dedications to friends left behind. One beautiful moment, when from a dense melee of horns and a loping drum

swish, a thin, muted trumpet makes a breathtaking wave at Miles. The band, under the orchestral direction of Eric Dolphy, is allowed to stray and explore, the pace moves from the frantic, to the leisurely, always brought back by Coltrane's long, familiar sighs, those riffs which have been copied and re-copied, by a thousand players since.

Side two, starts with a version of "Greensleeves" which would have had its writer (Henry VIII) tugging on his proto-jazz's beard. In Coltrane/Dolphy's hands it becomes a long, orchestral blues, out of which the tenor spirals like a kite, unconcerned by the busy-ness below him, particularly McCoy Tyner's least of chords. "Blues Minor" is by far the most "conventional" track – propelled largely by the nervously fast walking bass and cymbal work. Coltrane adopts the hard-edge tactic here, unlike the sensual, just-short-of-sweet sound elsewhere on the album.

In case you hadn't noticed, I'm a convert. This record is for my desert island – I can imagine fading the SOS sign, until the very last note had faded.

Sue Steward

BOBBY HUTCHERSON

Total Eclipse

(Blue Note BST 84291)

Recorded: Plaza Sound Studio, NY, 1968.

Herzog: Total Eclipse;

Matrix: Mamacita;

Pompellian.

Harold Land (ts, flt); Bobby

Hutcherson (vibes); Chick

Corea (p); Reggie Johnson

(bs); Joe Chambers (d).

HAD HE never struck another note, Bobby Hutcherson would still have had his place in jazz history for his contribution to Dolphy's classic *Out to Lunch*. *Total Eclipse* came nearly four years later and it's hardly to Hutcherson's fault that comparison puts his own set in the shade. The electric, nervous energy of his playing on the Dolphy cuts is gone, in its place a new confidence, and, at the same time, a more relaxed opportunity to work through an interest in multidirectional melodic development, leaving room round each new idea for his fellow players to tease out their own responses.

As on his other albums, Hutcherson prefers the "full" legato rhythm associated with men like Chambers and Reggie Johnson. The latter's bass is too busy and cluttered for my taste but it does provide the ideal grounding for the main soloists and helps anchor what could quickly become chaotic.

Harold Land, as he shows here on the waltz "Pompellian", is a more distinctive flautist than saxophonist, with a clear sharp tone that exactly matches Hutcherson's ringing, chiming vibraphone. Hutcherson never confuses his own instrument with the piano (as Bill Jackson continually did – and it's an association that has continued to hold the instrument back) and he carefully avoids the long arpeggios and blocked chords which are Corea's trademark, going instead for clearly struck, tightly pedalled clusters of sound. In this way the two instruments complement rather than collide or cancel.

"Total Eclipse", also down as "Mysterioso", is a remarkable outing, with a tremendous range of melodic and rhythmic incident. Its superficial prettiness, and that of

"Pompellian", the stand-out track, only masks the subtlety of what is going on.

The vibes are still regarded as a novelty instrument and there remains the temptation – Lionel Hampton was the guilty party – to clown rather than play. Hutcherson is well worth a revival of interest, ample proof that there is life after Bags and that there is a cure for Gary Burton.

Brian Morton

KENNY DORHAM

Trompeta Toccata

(Blue Note BST 84181)

Recorded: 1965.

Trompeta Toccata; Night

Watch; Mamacita; The Fox.

Dorham (tp); Joe

Henderson (ts); Tommy

Flanagan (p); Richard Davis

(b); Albert Heath (d).

DORHAM (IS it Kenny or Kinny?) (both-Ed) was always a musicians' musician. There is little flash or show to his playing and it was his great misfortune to emerge in the shadow first of Miles Davis, for whom reticence became a structural principle, and then of a whole range of more extravagant horn players, more likely to steal the limelight.

When Dorham recorded *Trompeta Toccata* in the mid-1960s, he had been working as special music consultant with the Harlem youth community group HARYOU-ACT. Either in response or reaction, his own work became more introspective and meditative. The title track, as the name suggests, has a declamatory, exalted feel, opening with a high proclamation on trumpet, but it settles quickly into quieter, wheeling mood with a steady, unobtrusive beat across the long, 20-bar structure. Richard Davis' bass solo, both supported and unaccompanied, draws every subtlety out of the theme. Dorham himself, as always, plays with admirable restraint and taste.

The quintet seems divided into two halves or modes, with Dorham's trumpet, even in ensemble horn passages set ahead of the rest: the bustle of Henderson and Heath, the quieter lyricism of Davis and Flanagan. Tommy Flanagan, in particular, revels in the second theme "Night Watch", a moody tune with a heavy blues overlay. This is the closest Dorham gets to out-and-out expressionism but without a hint of loss of control.

Joe Henderson's "Mamacita" and the wily, twisting "The Fox" demonstrate amply how little Dorham was suited to orthodox bebop. The easy bossa nova of the former and the sharper, trickier phrasings and changes of the closing track show how much he needed the longer-drawn-out bar lines and variable rhythms that became possible in the aftermath of bebop (and the longer cuts made possible by long-players). It would be absurd to suggest that playing with Parker held him back – though Dorham does talk of Bird's "shadow" as something to be escaped – but of all the alumni Dorham seemed least suited to the Parker curriculum, the most likely to find his own solitary direction. That was his limitation and his strength.

Brian Morton

FATS NAVARRO

The Fabulous Fats Navarro

Vol 2

(Blue Note BST 82312)
Lady Bird (+ alternative master); Jahbero (+ alternative master); Symphonette (+ alternative master); Double Talk; Bouncing With Bud; Dance of the Infidels; The Skunk (all alternatives); Bopation.
Navarro (tpt); with Bud Powell Quartet (on Dance of the Infidels):- Sonny Rollins (ts); Powell (p); Tommy Potter (b); Roy Haynes (d); Tadd Dameron Septet (on Lady Bird, Jahbero, Symphonette):- Allen Eager, Wardell Gray (ts); Dameron (p); Carly Russell (b); Kenny Clarke (d); Chano Pozo (bongo); McGhee-Navarro Bopet (on Double Talk, The Skunk, Bopation):- Howard McGhee (tpt); Ernie Henry (as); Milt Jackson (p, vibes); Carly Russell (b); Kenny Clarke (d).

LIFE AND late were hard on Fats Navarro. His voice and body – which won him the cruel nickname "Fat Girl" – got between his music and the very people first and best placed to appreciate it, his fellow musicians. When he died in 1950, still well short of 30, he nonetheless left an extraordinary legacy of material, much of the best of it garnered on the two-volume Blue Note *Fabulous*.

A tough apprenticeship in the Andy Kirk big band gave him the early maturity and confidence in his own technique clearly audible at every turn here. His solos are always superbly timed and weighted, entering on the split second without a hint of strain or effort. Only in the later cuts, those made with Bud Powell (here, and on the matching *Amazing Bud Powell*) does the depression and weariness begin to sound through. His association with Powell was fiery and often hurtful and Navarro sounds far happier in more familiar and friendly company. Howard McGhee, the trumpeter who was to take up the Navarro mantle, had been a benchfellow in the Kirk band.

One revelation of these cuts and of Volume 1 is the alto of Ernie Henry. In comparison, both Eager and Gray sound flabby and out of breath. However slack his body looked, Navarro never showed a second's distress on even the steepest melodic inclines; on the neck-and-neck "Double Talk", it is McGhee who comes off second best. Even when speed and energy are not the first requirement, as on "Bouncing With Bud", Navarro is no less at home with a warmer tone and attack.

The alternative takes show how carefully he reshaped his solos. Where some bebop instrumentalists, even Parker, were prepared to ditch one set of ideas and work again from scratch, Navarro adjusts, checks, switches stride by fractions, never entirely abandoning the original line of approach. That is testament enough to both his perfectionism and his first-take intuitions.

Brian Morton

LEE MORGAN
The Sidewinder
 (Blue Note BST 84157)

Recorded: New York, 1964.
The Sidewinder; Totem Pole; Gary's Notebook; Boy, What a Night; Hocus Pocus.
Lee Morgan (tpt); Joe Henderson (ts); Barry Harris (p); Bob Cranshaw (b); Billy Higgins (d).

MORGAN WAS a disappointing leader and writer. By far his most distinctive work was with the Jazz Messengers and, on *Blue Train*, with John Coltrane. The title track here, a stretched-out blues with unexpected changes of chord end mode, never quite generates the excitement or meanness claimed for it. Two blues waltzes – "Gary's Notebook" and "Boy, What a Night" – fill out the bulk of the album and show off Morgan's Clifford Brown-influenced approach as far as it will reach.

For me, Morgan's reputation has always been thoroughly overblown and not even a fresh hearing of this works a conversion. The interest here, such as it is, lies with Cranshaw, a regular sideman to Morgan, and with Barry Harris, a wily and subtle performer who manages to lift a couple of passages. Only on "Totem Pole", the most open-ended of the tracks, does the group meld into anything more than its fragmentary parts.

Less than inspiring, but then I could never swallow undiluted Clifford Brown either.

Brian Morton

SONNY ROLLINS
Volume Two
 (Blue Note BST 81558)
Recorded: Hackensack – 1957.
Why Don't I, Wall March, Misterioso, Reflections, You Stepped Out Of A Dream, Poor Butterfly.
Sonny Rollins (ts); Jay Jay Johnson (tbn); Horace Silver, Thelonious Monk (p); Paul Chambers (b); Art Blakey (d).

SONNY ROLLINS is probably the exception that proves Michael Cuscuna's rule-of-thumb about Blue Note and Prestige, namely that those artists who recorded for both labels in the Fifties generally did their better work for Blue Note. A lacklustre Sonny Rollins, *Volume One* stressed the point, but *Volume Two*, though it doesn't have the grandiloquent sweep of, say, a *Saxophone Colossus* or *Freedom Suite*, still has plenty to savour.

Thelonious Monk and Jay Jay Johnson for starters, the former guesting on his own two tunes ("Misterioso", "Reflections"), and invigorating the set with unmistakable leftfield touches; the latter demonstrating his mastery of bebop trombone on tracks like "You Stepped Out Of A Dream" and "Wall March", the solo here a marvel of fluency and technical finesse.

Rollins is in good form too, romping through the faster tunes, spraying his solos with quotes, and digging into the deeper registers for that typically huge, warm, authoritative sound on a ballad like "Poor Butterfly". It's Monk who brings out his best, though; his wracked lyricism on "Reflections", his slow-writing blues on "Misterioso", are riveting performances.

"Misterioso" is the set's big cheese; Monk's quirky blues become a lively game of musical

chairs as everyone takes a solo, Monk and Horace Silver share the piano stool, and Rollins, Johnson and Blakey trade choruses near the end, where Monk breaks up the beat and Blakey bangs it back together. The final result has a queer, stately charm.

Graham Lock

CHARLES MINGUS



The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady
 (Impulse AS 35)
Track A: Solo Dancer – Stop! Look! & Listen, Sinner Jim Whitey; Track B: Duet Solo Dancers – Hearts Beat and Shades In Physical Embrace; Track C: Group Dancers – (Soul Fusion) Freewoman; Mode D: Trio and Group Dancers – Stop! Look! and Sing Songs of Revolutions; Mode E: Single Solos and Group Dance – Saint and Sinner Join in Merriment on the Battle Front; Mode F: Group and Solo Dance – Of Love, Pain & Revolt then Farewell my Love 'til It's Freedom Day.
Rolf Ericson, Richard Williams (tpt); Quentin Jackson (tbn); Don Butterfield (contrabass tbn, tuba); Jerome Richardson (ss, bs, flt); Dick Hafer (ts, flt); Charles Mariano (as); Jaki Byard (p); Jay Berliner (g); Charles Mingus (b, p); Dannie Richmond (d).

"MR MINGUS thinks this is his best record": thus Edmund Pollock, PhD, clinical psychologist, inveigled by his friend into a slightly bemused liner note. If Mingus fans might want to add "... so far" Dr Pollock, with an eye to personality perhaps rather than music acknowledges that "Mr Mingus is not yet complete".

Nonetheless, *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* occupies an important place in Mingus's output. It came along in 1963 at a point where the bassist had begun to receive some long-merited recognition as a composer. Though he, quite typically, continued to work in rehearsal from piano cues rather than from full scores, the focus of interest does shift away from soloing towards a more coherent and orchestral sound.

This underlines the feeling that *Black Saint* in some way represented a drawing together and recapitulation of ideas Mingus had been

working for years. Familiarity with both players and material allowed tighter control and a fuller working out of his procedures. Certainly, repetition and variation of theme is the key to the album. The familiarity of much of the material and the constraint imposed on the players as soloists is balanced by the confidence evoked throughout and by Mingus's new-found (or only now utilised) sense of instrumental colour: unison trumpets, Don Butterfield's rare contrabass trombone, flutes and Jay Berliner's tautly strummed Spanish guitar.

There is, however, a lack of real emotional conviction on the whole album, a somewhat routine and mechanical run through its modes. "Pithecanthropus Erectus", on the album of that name, had been a cruder much less sophisticated essay in large-scale composition. But it did retain the fire and excitement missing from *Black Saint*. Only now and again, notably on Track C do ideas and execution coincide satisfactorily; there Mingus shows the way on piano (a definite improvement on Byard's over-elaborate playing), with flute, guitar and ensemble horns setting a platform for a wailing solo from Mariano that accelerates away from a militaristic drum beat and broken instrumental tempo, rides out a long accelerando passage and survives the lot in a plaintive solo finish.

For my money, this would have been climax enough. Side two is no more than more of the same, overcooked and unconvincing. As politics, as dancing, as (Dr Pollock) therapy, *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* tell a ways short of its own stated intentions. Half a great album, then, half of it very great; the rest illustrating the problems Mingus had and continued to have in reconciling the two sides of his musical personality. No one – precisely because his ambitions stretched beyond both recital rooms and jazz clubs – experienced and expressed the ambivalence of being a black artist in America better than Mingus.

Brian Morton

JOHN COLTRANE



A Love Supreme
(Impulse A-77)
Recorded: December 10, 1964.

Acknowledgement, Resolution, Pursuance, Psalm.
Coltrane (tenor); McCoy Tyner (p); Jimmy Garrison (b); Elvin Jones (d).

THIS IS one of those recordings which never disappoints. The intensity and commitment,

the power and the concentrated energy of it can be seen in Coltrane's face on the sleeve. The quartet, in its fourth year together, is at its best. Elvin Jones bnsk, bustling and dynamic in the ensembles and 'breathing' life into the more reflective passages with the familiar cymbal and block; McCoy Tyner absorbing, thoughtful and dramatic; Jimmy Garrison unflinching but masterful, Coltrane simply overpowering, constantly inventive, spellbindingly passionate. I can't think of a single negative thing to say about it – except I never did like the singing much (phooey!-Ed). This reissue comes in the original handsome gatefold sleeve, with Coltrane's poem, Kalin's charcoal drawing and perfect sound quality (courtesy of direct metal mastering). A beautiful, passionate, haunting piece of music – glorious stuff.

Chris Parker

JOHN COLTRANE

Impressions
(Impulse AS-42)
Recorded: New York, 5 November 1961, 18 September 1962, 29 April 1963.

Indis, Up 'Gainst The Wall, Impressions, After The Rain.
Coltrane (ss, ts); Eric Dolphy (bs-clt on *Indis*); McCoy Tyner (p); Jimmy Garrison (b); Reggie Workman (b on *Indis*); Elvin Jones (d); Roy Haynes (d on *After The Rain*).

IMPRESSIONS HAS become available again in its original packaging with the sound cleaned up by direct metal mastering, and is a must. The title track is, of course, based on Miles Davis' "So What", a 32 bar AABA vehicle which uses two modes (Dorian) to correspond to the form. Coltrane, however, merely uses this as an outline for his exhaustive voyage of exploration. The exuberance of "Giant Steps" is replaced by a darker, troubled search for daylight beyond the harmonic prison. This is typical middle period Coltrane – dismantling and reassembling harmonic shapes, often distorted into arhythmic phrases that are remorselessly piled one upon the other, discarded in the intensity of his search.

For a long section Tyner is tact to produce laboratory conditions for tenor and drums to ransack their resources. Coltrane's explorations, sometimes as long as an hour or so, meant the rhythm section could not be complacent. The hypnotic insistence of narrow harmonic eases meant a greater rhythmic involvement, with all instruments being relatively equal to contribute to the relentless drive and flow of the music, as in "India", an exploration of indigenous scales. It is at a medium tempo, with that rolling drum figure that is the personal property of Elvin Jones. Eric Dolphy joins Coltrane on bass clarinet, and as always when in tandem with him is less energetic and more considered. Coltrane switches to soprano for this number and the search begins. It is exciting, exhausting and indispensable.

Stuart Nicholson

GATO BARBIERI
Chapter Three: Viva

Emiliano Zapata

(Impulse ASD-9279)
Recorded: June 24 and 26, New York.
Milonga Triste, Lluvia Azul, El Sublime, La Positiva, Cuando Vuelvo A Tu Lado, Viva Emiliano Zapata.
Barbieri (ts); Victor Paz, Bob McCoy, Randy Brecker, Alan Rubin (tp), flg-hrn; Ray Alonge, Jimmy Buffington (fr-hrn); Buddy Morrow (tbn); Alan Raph (bs-tbn); Howard Johnson (ts, flg-hrn, bs-clt); Seldon Powell (fts, saxes); Eddie Martinez (p); George Davis, Paul Metzke (gtrs); Ron Carter (b); Grady Tate (d); Ray Armando, Luis Mangual, Ray Mantilla, Portinho (perc). Arranged and conducted by Chico O'Farrill.

TEXTURE AND rhythm; these are the essences of Barbieri's third chapter for Impulse. Deploying his furious rasp across the rich landscape of Chico O'Farrill's arrangements, the Argentine tenor sounds steamed-up and focussed to a degree not always attained in less sympathetic settings. His lightbulb-in-the-lawnmower tone is not to everyone's taste – in the wrong context it can sound merely theatrical – but given the pungent, shifting rhythms and dense foliage of a latin-jazz orchestra his lack of genuine dynamic range is largely irrelevant, his burning intensity a positive asset.

Chapter Three... is a straightforward excursion through a catalogue of Latin rhythms. There is little extravagant improvisation, Barbieri preferring to scoop meaning out of the simple romantic fiction between himself and the orchestra. On occasion, as in the (apparently original) version of "What A Difference A Day Makes" – "Cuando Vuelvo A Tu Lado" – the rounded edges and lack of poke in the percussion lead the tune into Marlini ad territory. But when the mood is less fragile the album really cooks.

"Milonga Triste", the opener, is a sultry Argentine melody. O'Farrill's arrangement opens out with a smoky inevitability while Barbieri growls, swarmingly passionate. This is wonderful, seductive stuff that is only otherwise matched by "La Padrida", a brisk mambo, and the title track. "Viva..." starts off with that loping piano figure that crops up frequently in New York Salsa – apparently called a montuno – before sliding silyly into another mambo. The story of the tune is of a frantic append of sound, horns dancing in end out of Barbieri's low-trajectory improvisation like mosquitoes, percussion retreating over a pumping Ron Carter.

Not exactly an essential album, but properly applied it's a reissue that might just vapourise some of the soggy moments of this dismal summer.

Nick Coleman

DIZZY GILLESPIE
Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac
(Impulse AS-9149)
Recorded: Los Angeles, May 1967

**Swing Low, Sweet Cadillac,
Mac Que Nada, Bye,
Something In Your Smile,
Kush.**

**Dizzy Gillespie (tpt, voc);
James Moody (as, ts, flt,
voc); Mike Longo (p); Frank
Schifano (el-b); Candy Finch
(d).**



IN WHICH Dizzy is ably abetted in his jivey tomfoolery by the equally extrovert James Moody, intermingling some playing with the chat and scat.

I was astonished last year to hear Moody play in the flesh. He turned in a brilliant set, the highlight of which was a display of staggeringly forthright alto playing that belied the rather low-key records I'd heard. *Swing Low...* finds him in strictly sideman land once more, overshadowed by his leader, unable, or perhaps unwilling, to stretch out.

It's one of those albums you can take or leave; useful to have around as a jolly, atmospheric panacea to the most superficial of glooms, merely irritating if technique and wit are less than your full requirement. The best cut is "Kush". Over its sprawling 16 minutes the rhythm section chug hypnotically allowing Gillespie space to dabble, mixing great searing passages with moments in which he appears to be studying the shine on his toe-caps. The technique is brilliant, the moods clearly articulated; it leaves me stone cold. On alto, Moody seems content to flick through the changes until the leader and Longo prompt him into some more excitable action.

I don't know... somehow Dizzy, towering, significant Dizzy, needles me with blotchy records like this. A Pearly King, this is jazz tradition sewn onto an ordinary jacket like sequins. It is exhibition.

Nick Coleman

MAX ROACH

It's Time

(Impulse AS-16)

Recorded: Englewood Cliffs,

N.J., early 1962

It's Time; Another Valley;

Sunday Afternoon; Living

Room; The Profit;

Lonesome Lover.

Max Roach (d, comp, arr);

Richard Williams (tp); Julian

Priester (tb); Clifford Jordan

(ts); Mal Waldron (p); Art

Davis (b); Abbey Lincoln (vcl

on Lonesome); 16-vocal

choir; Coleridge Perkinson

(cond).

AN ABSORBING album whose use of the choir preceded by a few years the similar efforts of Donald Byrd and Duke Ellington. Given that the tone colour of the singers is bound to dominate the passages in which they occur, it is to Roach's credit that the musical and emotional content is so varied, and that the result is definitely jazz-with-voices rather than "vocal jazz" (apart from Abbey Lincoln's brief appearance).

His own brilliant playing is particularly featured on the first two tracks (complete with "For Big Sid" quotation in "Another Valley"), though his rhythm-section work is crucial to the whole album. The different time-signatures such as 3/4, 5/4 and 7/4 may have been a peg on which to hang a concept (and a rope to hang Brubeck?) (*Cruel!*-ed.) but they are made to sound totally natural and unobtrusive. In addition, the other soloists are really stretched, with Jordan and Williams especially making good use of the space.

Perhaps Roach's most effective vocal writing is on *Lift Every Voice and Sing* (Atlantic) which, as he said recently, is "a record you don't see very often". Similarly,



this album used to be quite rare, and whoever chose it for reissue deserves a bonus.

Brian Priestley

ARCHIE SHEPP

Fire Music

(Impulse AS-86)

Recorded: Englewood Cliffs,

N.J., February 16, 1965,

*March 9, 1965.

Hambone; Los Olvidados;

Malcolm, Malcolm -

Semper Malcolm; Prelude

To A Kiss; The Girl from

Ipanema.

Archie Shepp (ts); Ted

Curson (tp); Joseph Orange

(tb); Marion Brown (as);

Reggie Johnson (b); Joe

Chambers (d).

Archie Shepp (ts, voice);

David Izenzon (bs); J.C.

Moses (d).

EVERY MORE than Shepp's first album for Impulse (*Four for Trane*), this set from six months later gives a clear picture of his unfulfilled potential. Especially in terms of his composing and bandleading ability, it will be a revelation to those only familiar with his latter-day work.

"Hambone" is a well-developed piece in several sections which, like all the best jazz writing, doesn't seem restrictive for the

performers, while "Los Olvidados" has some beautiful passages of collective improvisation from the horns. "Ipanema", incidentally, is a fairly jokey version on which the choppy ensemble voicings work better than they did on the arrangements for the *Trane* album, and solo-wise features Shepp all the way as does "Kiss". Elsewhere, both Curson and Brown sound more interesting than they sometimes have since, and the rhythm-section of the main group is excellent throughout.

The postscript to the rest of the album, inspired by Malcolm X's assassination five days after the earlier session, is one of the more successful and more restrained uses of poetry with jazz. In fact, I'd gladly sacrifice everything Shepp has done in the last ten years if it increased the reputation of the present record.

Brian Priestley

ALBERT AYLER

Live at the Village Vanguard

(Impulse AS9155)

Recorded: February 26, 1967

and December 18, 1966.

For John Coltrane; Change

Has Come.

Albert Ayler (as); Joel

Friedman (cello); Alan Silva,

Bill Folwell (b); Beaver

Harris (d)

Truth is Marching In; Our

Prayer.

Albert Ayler (ts); Don Ayler

(tpt); Michael Simpson

(violin); Bill Folwell, Henry

Grimes (b); Beaver Harris

(d).

SINCE ONE critic got himself in Pseud's Corner recently for claiming to have vomited the first time he heard Bessie Smith - awe rather than disgust, takes some people that way - I won't overplay the hand. But I do recall that the first time I heard this album, a long time back and another country, I whipped it off the turntable after five minutes for the safer reaches of *The Yes Album* or *Soft Machine*. The musical schizophrenia still hadn't cleared up.

My reaction to Ayler wasn't or wasn't just conservatism and suspicion. I had simply never heard anything so dangerous. Of all that remarkable generation of reedmen, Ayler's sound was the most haunting and cutting. If Coltrane seemed in contact with some higher reality, Ayler was definitely possessed. No-one ever matched it and almost none was able to follow (except, I'd argue, the underrated early Gato Barbieri).

Ayler's use of cello and twinned basses (a format - one bass only - used to similar if lesser effect on Gato's *In Search of the Mystery*) produces an extraordinary harmonic drone under what remains the strongest sax playing on record. The higher pitched alto sounds well forward even of the cello at its top end and Ayler's solos rip back and forth like gulls.

What separates Ayler's from other tributes to John Coltrane - Shepp's, Tyner's - is that it is, positively, a tribute not yet athrenody. Coltrane died in the coming summer. Nothing else got nearer the man's own vision.

"Change Has Come" shifts mood and tempo dramatically, into a wildly spinning group performance so involving that you could

almost believe the chuckled "oh yeah" at the end was your own.

It is possible to march to "Truth is Marching In". Coltrane was present when this version was recorded and Ayler responds with his definitive performance on tenor.

Music this fierce is as subversive as (going rate) twenty marches or half a dozen rallies. Yet Ayler was sceptical about "freedom"; truth, music's province, was a stronger and more reliable brew. Sadly, the truth that marched for him – as for the softer dreams of many of his surviving contemporaries – was the least truth. It was always possible to believe Ayler died by hands other than his own; knowledge like this gets no forgiveness. And it still scares the shit out of me.

Brian Morton

CHARLES MINGUS

Mingus, Mingus, Mingus,
(Impulse AS-54)

Recorded: New York City –
20 January 1963, 20
September 1963.

*Il B.S., I X Love, Cella, Mood
Indigo, Better Get Hit In Yo'
Soul, Theme For Lester
Young, Hora Decubitus.*

Charles Mingus (b, p);
January session – Rolf
Ericson, Richard Williams
(t); Quentin Jackson (tbn);
Don Butterfield (tba);
Jerome Richardson (ss, brt-
s, f); Dick Hafer (ts, f);
Charles Mariano (as); Jaki
Byard (p); Jay Berliner (g);
Dannie Richmond (d);
September session – Eddle
Preston, Richard Williams
(t); Britt Woodman (tbn);
Don Butterfield (tba);
Jerome Richardson (ss, brt-
s, f); Dick Hafer (ts, ct, f);
Booker Ervin (ts); Eric
Dolphy (as, f); Jaki Byard
(p); Walter Perkins (d).

TWO ELEVEN-piece ensemble dates, one from the same session as *The Black Saint And The Sinner Lady*, the other from several months later, both devoted to reworkings of previously recorded material. In his Mingus biography, Brian Priestley quotes Joachim Berend's response to this practice – that Mingus forgets "that the creative process which took place during the original recording cannot be replaced by any amount of technical perfection". This seems a harsh judgement, only an airbrushed "Mood Indigo" is glaringly inferior, the humour of its 1959 predecessor sadly expunged, while the stirring solo contributions of Charlie Mariano and Booker Ervin, plus the astute piano accompaniments of Jaki Byard, make most of this LP very listenable in its own right.

The record's slogan, "Ethnic Folk-Dance Music" – first seen on the *Black Saint* LP – suggests Mingus was still in his "classical" mood, perhaps inspired by that LP's success to treat some of his earlier songs to this large-ensemble, neo-Ellingtonian grandeur. I think most of them survive the treatment pretty well; a little of their previous gung-ho bravado is curtailed, perhaps, but they still swing like crazy with the Mingus bass and all those

horns driving them along. I particularly like "Theme For Lester Young" (aka "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat"), a lovely slow blues here given a tender, stately arrangement on which much care has obviously – and effectively – been lavished.

Graham Lock

AHMAD JAMAL

The Awakening

(Impulse AS-914)

Recorded: New York,

February 2-3 1970.

*The Awakening, I Love
Music, Patterns, Dolphin
Dance, You're My
Everything, Stolen
Moments, Wave.*

Jamal (p), Jamil Nasser (b),
Frank Gant (d).

AHMAD JAMAL is one of the great enigmas in jazz. Now an almost forgotten figure, in his heyday he excited praise from Art Tatum, John Hammond, Miles Davis and Leonard Feather. Unfortunately the reason for their collective enthusiasm is not on this record, so it is perhaps oversimplistic to say that it's not from his heyday. But it's worth remembering that from the time he recorded *Chamber Music of the New Jazz* in 1955 to the sudden death of his bass player Israel Crosby in 1962, Jamal had one of the best rhythmic sections in jazz. Sparked by Vernell Fournier's drumming, it combined inspired intuitive musicianship with Jamal's highly edited piano that ambushed the listener with sudden crescendos and beguiled with long ostinatos. In 1958 Jamal had a hit – "But Not For Me". From then on the dice was cast, dollars beckoned and formula replaced inspiration, routines replaced creation.

The Awakening comes from the late sixties when the Jamal formula had just about been milked dry. Coasting on his not considerable technique, Jamal replaces the meaty flourishes of the past with roccoco runs. Dramatic pauses are now periods of silence, the unexpected crescendos predictable. The group no longer digs in and swing, and ephemeral material, such as "I Love Music" and Jamal's own "Patterns" and "The Awakening", fails to convince. There are glimpses of the old Jamal on "Wave", "Stolen Moments" and "Dolphin Dance", but not sufficient to persuade anyone without his Cadet outfit that the history writers of jazz have committed any sin of omission.

Stuart Nicholson

HUGH HOPPER, ELTON DEAN, KEITH TIPPETT & JOE GALLIVAN

Mercy Dash

(Culture Press CP 2001)

*Intro, Calyx, Waffle Dust,
Brass Wind Bells, Anguishy,
Waffling Again, Punkom.*
Hugh Hopper (b); Elton Dean
(as, saxello); Keith Tippett
(p); Joe Gallivan (d, perc,
synth).

THE NEW ORCHESTRA

Ailana

(Hannibal HNBL 1314)

*Archipelago, Ryo-Egberto,
Traditional Music, Space*

Monkeys (Incorporating Forsoothe), The Soul Of The Wind.

Joe Gallivan (synth, perc);
Charles Austin (ss, ft, alto-
fl); Ryo Kawasaki (g-syn);
Clive Stevens (lyricon, ss,
ts, ft); Peter Ponzol (lyricon,
ss); George Bishop (bs-clt,
contra-bs-clt); Gene
Golden (bata-drums, vcl);
Sabu Morales (bata-drums,
perc); Wendell Hayes (bata-
drums, vcl); Tadashi
Yasunaga (triangle).

HAVING FLOATED around on the 'future release' schedules of, first, Compendium, and later, Ogun, *Mercy Dash* finally snuggles into the racks courtesy of the new Culture Press label, some seven years after it was first committed to tape. It's the blast of a spectacular past: rooted both in the avant/fusion pastures of Soft Machine and the various free-music interests developing on the fringes of the 'Canterbury Scene' – notably Dean's *Just Us* and the later *Soft Heap* which featured both Hopper and Dean (Tippett, a singular, more strictly jazz-oriented pianist was guilty more by association).

The accent here is on collective improvising, on and around predetermined themes. Phil Miller's "Calyx" is rolled and stretched like plasticine, first by Dean's spiralling alto, then by Tippett's muscular lines. "Brass Wind Bells", a contrasting modal-type piece, builds on Tippett's repetition of the keys, with Gallivan orchestrating a progressively turbulent rhythmic underlay. Hopper's bass throb is omnipresent, if rather low in the mix – e-mollan glow from the centre of the cauldron.

"Ailana", similarly lacking in factio-matter as to where and when, sounds out different possibilities – a worldly music of earthy rhythms and hi-tech settings, lucked around elements of Western classicism. On Gallivan and Charles Austin's early (and superb) duo recordings, it manifested itself as panoramic improvisations which compressed time and space. On "Ailana", it discovers more overt melodies, a syrupy electronic texture, less intimacy. Side one is awash with gadgetry – the spirit drowns. On side two, simplicity saves it – Austin reclaims his haunting magnificence on the closer "Soul Of The Wind", delivering his best solo of the album, whilst "Space Monkeys" (Gallivan, Austin and Kawasaki) stroll through a rendition of Elton Dean's "Forsoothe" like cogs in a slow-running engine. Otherwise, it's a case of 'fear too many cooks'. Shame.

David Ilic

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Bop City – Midnight

(Boplicity BOPM 9)

*Wes Montgomery: D Natural
Blues (1960), Milt Jackson:
The Nearness Of You (1955),
Miles Davis: My Funny
Valentine (1956), Ben
Webster: Rockin' In Rhythm
(1969), Jackie McLean: Old
Folks (1958), Miles Davis:
Nature Boy (1955), Sonny
Rollins: You Don't Know
What Love Is (1956),*

Thelonious Monk: *Round Midnight* (1957).

Bop City – Straight Ahead (Boplicity BOPM 10)

Art Blakey:

One By One,

Miles Davis:

If I Were A Bell,

Oliver Nelson: *Straight Ahead*,

Donald Byrd & Art

Farmer: *The Third* (1956),

John Coltrane:

Theme For Ernie

(1958),

Sonny Rollins:

St Thomas (1956).

THESE TWO compilation albums are from the series 'Bop City' which Boplicity are issuing, comprising material from the Prestige and Riverside labels of the late 50's and early 60's. Much of this material is or recently was otherwise available on the Prestige double-album reissue programme, and is here presented in the form of hard bop compilations probably intended to appeal to the thriving younger market (the present writer is 27).

At least, the sleeve-notes imply that hard bop is what is on offer; in fact, even though the term is ill-defined, several tracks are clearly not in that category. 'Hard bop' is a kind of simplified bop which appeared in the second half of the 50's as a reaction by black musicians to the European excesses of the Cool School. The guiding lights were Art Blakey and Horace Silver; Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane are often included in the category and Mingus might be too, but the doubts here show that the really major figures cannot readily be subsumed under what is really not a 'genre'.

On the two albums under review, 22-carat hard bop is in short supply, but despite (or perhaps because of) this, the music is, almost without exception, of high quality, and some of it is classic modern jazz. The exception is the version of 'Rockin' in Rhythm' from the mis-named Ben Webster album *At Work In Europe* (1969). Of this piece, Nick Coleman in his sleeve-note claims that "the whole assumes the animation of the best conversation". This really is an extraordinary judgment. Ben Webster was certainly in Europe, but with his (by this time) flaccid tone, rhythmic lethargy and improvisational short measure he was hardly putting in much work, and one could look for more animated conversation from a corpse.

The classic tracks are from three sources – Miles, Monk and Rollins. There are two offerings from the vastly influential series of Davis Quintet recordings of the mid-50's on Prestige ('Funny Valentine' and 'If I Were A Bell'), plus 'Nature Boy'. The latter is a miraculous mood-fantasy of haunting beauty, which, partly because of its unusual instrumentation, is unlike anything else Davis has done. (The track listing omits to credit Teddy Charles on vibraphone, and wrongly gives Art Taylor instead of Elvin Jones on drums. Incidentally, the irritatingly neurotic drumming of Art Taylor can be heard on too many tracks, though he's fortunately fairly subdued on most occasions.) From Monk, there is a solo version of (you guessed it)

'Round Midnight', taken mostly at a halting pace, and exhibiting without distraction from other performers what Max Harrison has aptly termed his 'adulterated dissonance'.

Finally, there are two Rollins tracks from the Saxophone Colossus LP of 1956 – 'You Don't Know What Love Is' and 'St Thomas'. The latter is, for all its ironic touches, one of the most joyful of all jazz performances on record (though rivalled by the live version on the magnificent eponymous album recently released on Dragon' (DRLP 73)).

There are, in addition, fine offerings by the Jazz Messengers (featuring Wayne Shorter), Eric Dolphy, Coltrane, Donald Byrd and Jackie McLean. Dolphy and Oliver Nelson provide a fascinating contrast of styles on the exuberant 'Straight Ahead'. So – a couple of interesting compilations very handy for introducing later bop to someone new to jazz.

Andy Hamilton

FORWARD MOTION

The Berklee Tapes

(Hep 2026)

Recorded: Berklee College

of Music,

Massachusetts,

November 7 1984

is this Really it;

Sunwind;

For Someone I Love;

Forward Motion.

Tommy Smith (ts); Laszlo

Gardonyi (p);

Terje Gewelt

(b); Ian Froman (d).

HYPE AND backlash follow each other round the ring. Logic seems to run that if you're a prodigy at 16 (you can't find many who deny Tommy Smith that accolade) you ought to be walking on water by your majority. Already the doubters are hopping back off the bandwagon.

The first and obvious thing to make clear about *The Berklee Tapes* is that it's a Forward Motion, not just a Tommy Smith, album. The young Scot is one quarter, no more or less, of an impressive band who show more understanding and empathy on a relatively short acquaintance than many a band finds in a decade.

The international line-up – Scotland, Hungary, Norway, Canada – met up at the Berklee College where all were students or graduates. Much of the writing falls to bassist Gewelt, though both of them and wholly improvised pieces are left open so that each soloist can, as Smith explains, develop his ideas and bring them to a climax but still leave sufficient leeway for his colleagues to follow parallel tracks of their own. The effect is curiously thoughtful and introspective and for all the new vigour and ruggedness people are hearing in Smith's tenor playing, he still seems at his best in the slightly withdrawn sound of his (hah!) younger days.

Tapes is a welcome addition to the growing Hep list and it's to be hoped that Alastair Robertson (to whom all praise) can get Forward Motion into the studio. With the exception of Gardonyi's piano playing the group sound is too intimate, even when assertive, and too dependent on live atmospheres to come across wholly on disc from live tapes.

Brian Morton

THE SPIRITS OF RHYTHM

The Spirits Of Rhythm 1933–34

(JSP 1088)

Nobody's Sweetheart, I Got Rhythm, I've Got The World On A String, I Got Rhythm, Rhythm, I'll Be Ready When The Great Day Comes, My Old Man, Way Down Yonder In New Orleans, I've Got The World On A String, From Monday On, As Long As I Live, Junk Man, Dr Watson And Mr Holmes, That's What I Like About You, Shoutin' In That Amen Corner, Leo Watson, Wilbur Daniels, Douglas Daniels (v, tipple); Teddy Bunn (g); Virgil Scoggins (d, v); Wilton Myers (b); Red McKenzie (v).

THE SPIRITS OF Rhythm purveyed hokum, pop entertainment and a good deal of lively infectious fun apiced with quality jazz solo work. Featuring Leo Watson's vocal lead, the Spirits also made much use of human orchestral effects as charts for a series of contemporary 1933 hit tunes. Strange that sleeve note writer Max Jones seems uncertain of the ultimate appeal of this good time vocal music ('Those approaching it for the first time should be in for a slight surprise'). Much of the sleeve note thus considers this music from a jazz perspective and, in particular, devotes space to a panegyric for Teddy Bunn and his importance as a major jazz guitarist. But Bunn doesn't solo on every track, and the ear is equally captivated by Leo Watson and the solo tipple playing of Wilbur or Douglas Daniels. Whoever is responsible, he is an excellent jazz soloist in his own right, producing clipped single string lines curiously similar to early amplified jazz guitar.

However, there is no denying Bunn's part in this music. It is Teddy Bunn's rhythm chording which is primarily responsible for the hectic pace and attack of uptempo numbers such as 'Nobody's Sweetheart' and 'I Got Rhythm', and he also uses chords and single string work to construct a virtuosic solo on the latter title. Whilst there is no opportunity for him to display the superb blues guitar he recorded at around this time (for example, with Tommy Ladnier), his best work on this album demonstrates a grasp of harmony advanced for its date. 'Way Down Yonder In New Orleans' contains a riveting ascending sequence which rips the tune's harmonic structure apart – Charlie Christian could have done no better.

Ultimately though, the solo work is merely an interlude, and a small part of the whole. Leo Watson takes up most space on this album and it is evident that he had listened to Louis a lot (his trumpet rather than his singing, except for surface effects) but he is very much his own man and a joy to hear. My only reservation is that there is a degree of sameness about the vocal backing and continued use of three tipples in the rhythm which makes it sufficient to hear one side rather than both – and four tracks are spoiled by the addition of Red McKenzie's lugubrious and truly awful singing. Otherwise, recommended.

Dave Cunningham

BACK ISSUES

1.

Ren Bleke; Camden on Camera, Eric Dolphy, Steve Lacy; Harold Land; Leo Records; Wynton Marsalis; Art Pepper tribute; Max Roach; Scuffling & Bopping: Seven Steps to Jazz - Trumpet; John Stevens Part I: Women Live

3.

Albert Ayler, Sidney Bechet; Eubie Blake tribute, Eric Dolphy discography Part II, Bill Evans: Festivals on Camera - Gérard Rouy; Percy Grainger; Don McGlynn - film producer; George Russell Part I; Paul Rutherford, Seven Steps - Piano; Archie Shepp, Weather Report

8.

Cadillac Records: Coltrane's A Love Supreme; Count Basie tribute; Ted Curson; Miles Davis concert; Festivals - Moers and Le Mans, Barry Guy; Abdullah Ibrahim (Doller Brand); Metalanguage; Michel Petrucciani; Seven Steps - Bass

9.

Art Ensemble of Chicago; Benny Carter; Charly RSB; Andrew Cyrille; Manu Dibango; Two Maces; Meredith Monk; Paul Murphy; Oliver Nelson's The Blues and the Abstract Truth; Recording Improvised Music; Trevor Watts' More Music; Where Were You In '62?

10.

Aberlons, Armstrong's West End Blues;

Amn Baraka; Black Masks, White Masks, Art Blakey; Borbetomegus; Jazz At The Phil issues; Hugh Masekela; Thelma Houston; Monk, Jerry Wester

11.

AMM: Blue Note Reborn, Eric Dolphy's Out To Lunch; Last poet Jalal Nurdini; "Novelty" Pianists; Irene Schweizer; Seven Steps - Trombone; UK Blues Index; Wayne Shorter

12.

Afro Jazz: Laurie Anderson; Gone . But Not Forgotten - Vic Dickenson, Dennis Rose, Colin Walcott; Chris McGregor; Phil Minton-Roger Turner; New Year's Honours List, New Year Ear & Eye - Gospel, Mo'Nasty, Cecil Taylor; Max Roach's We insist! Freedom Now Suite

13.

Peter Brötzmann's Machine Gun, Charlie Parker section: Salsa, Musa Suso; The Wire's Guide to Bargains

14.

Arts Council; Harry Belafonte; British Summer Time Ends; Kenny Clarke tribute; Graham Collier; Free Music Overview, Hip London Scene; Incus Festival; Jazz Funding; London Venues; Evan Parker's Saxophone Solos; Round The Regions; John Surman; Mike Westbrook; Where Guide - Manchester; Anne Whitehead



Derek Bailey; Monty Python; George Benson; Benjamin Chavis; Charles Mingus - Pittsburgh; Eric Dolphy; Phil Minton, Jim Mullen; Norma Winstone

Anthony Braxton; Dave Brubeck; Cecil Taylor; King; Ornette Coleman; John Lewis; Max Roach; Zoot Sims; Billie Holiday; Max Roach

17.

Ray Charles; John Gilmore; Herbie Nichols; Daniel Ponce; Jazz in Paris, Betty Boop, Palatin; Afro-Jazz

18.

Sonny Rollins; Bobby McFerrin, Jayne Cortez; Stanley Jordan, Tommy Chese; Bertrand Tavernier, Joe Farrell (great issue!)

19.

Ornette Coleman, Charlie Haden; Steve Lacy; Boyd Rice; Slim Gaillard; Movie Jazz; Peter Lind, Urban Sax

PLEASE NOTE: ISSUES 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7 OUT OF PRINT

Please send £1.50 per copy (inc p & p) to: Back Issues, The Wire, 51 Beak Street, London W1R 4AB, England.

RECENT RELEASES

● The following have been released, or imported, since the last issue went to press. Except where a date is shown, they are believed to be recent recordings but no liability can be accepted for inaccurate information.

Listing here does not preclude a subsequent review.

HERB ALPERT: *Wild Romance* (AMA5082)
AHMAD JAMAL TRIO: *The Awakening* (AS9194)

CHRIS ABRAHAM: *Piano* (Making Waves HTLP 1014)

ALBERT AYLER: *Live at Greenwich Village* (Warners AS9155)

GATO BARBEIRI: *Chapter Three Viva Emiliano Zapata* (Warners ASD9279)

KENNY BARRON: *Scratch* (Enja 4092)

BOP CITY: *Straight Ahead* (Boplicity BOPM10)

BOP CITY: *Monument* (Boplicity BOPM9)

THE BENDERS: *Distance* (HTLP 1015)

BUMBLEBEE: *Born to Win* (YUS3)

BOURY: *Fur Herr Kasper* (Jazzland Musik JHM16)

JOHN COLTRANE: *A Love Supreme* (Warners AS77)

STANLEY CLARKE: *Find Out* (CBS CB291)

JOHN COLTRANE QUARTET: *Airua Brass* (Warners AS6)

JOHN COLTRANE: *Impressions* (Warners AS42)

19 TRACKS FROM CHICAGO BLUES: (Red Lightnin RL0057)

DAVID HOLLAND QUINTET: *Seeds of Time* (ECM1292)

DAVID DEFRIES: *The Secret City* (NMC009)

COLEMAN HAWKINS: *Desafinado* (AS-28)

DUB SYNDICATE: *Tunes from the Missing*

Channel (ON.U SoundON.ULP38)

DIOKO: *Porosi* (JHM20ST)

JIMMY DAWKINS: *Feel the Blues* (JSP1093)

EVERYMAN BAND: *Without Warning* (ECM1290)

DUKE ELLINGTON MEETS COLEMAN HAWKINS: (AS26)

GIL EVANS ORCHESTRA: *Out of the Cool* (AS4)

MICHAEL FRANKS: *Skin Dive* (Warners 925275-1)

PHIL GUY: *Its a real Mutha Fucka* (JSP1094)

DIZZY GILLESPIE: *Swing Low Sweet Cadillac* (Warners AS9149)

THE GREAT J.J. AND KAI: (AS1)

EARL HINES: *Once Upon A Time* (Warners AS9108)

HOPPER DEAN/TIPPETT/GALLIVAN: *Mercy Dash* (Culture Press CP2001)

HUBBARD CUBBARD: *Nip it in the Bud* (Coda 16)

"I don't give a damn if whites bought it"

Ralph Bass Sessions Vols 4/5 Red Lightnin (RL0056/57)

RONALD SHANNON JACKSON: *Decode Yourself* (Island LPS9827)

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET: *Live at the Montreux Jazz Festival* (Pablo Live)

QUINCY JONES: *The Quintessence* (AS11)

EARL KLUUGH: *Soda Fountain Shuffle* (Warners 925262-1)

THE LOVED ONE: *Locate and Cement* (Metaphon M1)

JOELLE LEANDRE: *Sincerely* (Plainshipare PL1267)

LONNIE MACK: *Strike Like Lightning* (Sonet SNTF 935)

MOERS DUISBERG KOLN: (JHM18ST)

MAISHA SADAQ WATANABE:

(WEA252194-1)

MINGUS: *Black Saint and Sinner Lady* (AS35)

MINGUS: (AS54)

NEW YORK ARTISTS COLLECTIVE PLAYS

BUTCH MORRIS: (NYCAC503)

NANA: *Über Leben* (JHM17ST)

THE NEW ORCHESTRA: *African* (Hannibal HNB1314)

MAX ROACH: *It's Time* (AS16)

AL RAPONE: *Let's Have a Zydeco Party* (JSP1092)

SONNY ROLLINS AND THE CONTEMPORARY LEADERS: (6A671 68.603)

RICH SZABO: *Best of both Worlds* (BBWRS 2001)

TONY AND STOOD: *Swing Masters* (Black Market BMA001)

ZOOT SIMS: *In A Sentimental Mood* (Sonet SNTF932)

PHAROAH SANDERS: *Tauhid* (AS9138)

PHAROAH SANDERS: *Thambi* (AS9206)

PHAROAH SANDERS: *Black Unity* (AS9219)

ARCHIE SHEPP: *Fire Music* (AS86)

DAVE SMITH: *Albanian Summer* (Practical 2)

BUD SHANK: *Live at the Hague* (Concept VL2)

KOLINER SAXAPHON MAFIA: *Die Saxuelle Befreiung* (JHM19ST)

TIZIANO TONON/DAVID SAERCY/JONATHAN SCULLY: (Buscemi B2)

FINGERS TAYLOR: *Harpoon Man* (RL0058)

JOHN WILLIAMS OCTET: *Year of the Buffalo* (Spotlite SPJ553)

ATTILA ZOLLER: *Conjunction* (Enja 3015)

Compiled by Jayne Houghton

JAZZWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Do they help Art Blakey really deliver? (4,10)
- 8 Dugal Clark
- 9 Altoist with a Lerner and Loewe connection? (4,5)
- 12 Saxman Harold who's gigged with Machito, Basie etc.
- 14 Just ol' man Mose
- 16 Fazola or Hotsy Totsy Mills?
- 17 Dr Nyak unwinds for organist Charles (anag)
- 20 They were against tomorrow for John Lewis' film score
- 22 Sane Mr Surle turns keyboard pounder (anag 4,7)
- 26 Woody's tribute to Stravinsky
- 27 Hardwicke, co-composer of "Sophisticated Lady"
- 28 Four Brothers man who twinned with Zoot (2,4)
- 29 Cut by Julian?
- 30 See 10 down

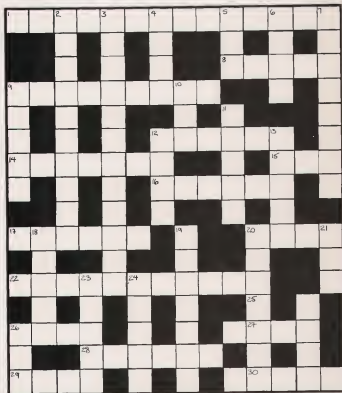
DOWN

- 2 He had a hit with "And The Angels Sing" (5,5)
- 3 Trombone-playing Albert from Frankfurt
- 4 and 12 A Gillespie big band special (4,2,2)
- 5 Adderley or Cole?
- 6 The nobility of Swope and Hines
- 7 Ken Rylis flew Charlie Barnet to success (anag)
- 10 and 30 across Saxman who topped Metronome's poll in '37 and '39 (3,5)
- 11 Movie that boasted a Sonny Rollins score
- 12 See 4 down
- 13 See 21 down
- 18 Youthful, like Lester
- 19 and 25 Louis Jordan's request to Richard (4,3,4)
- 20 Coleman, but not Hawkins
- 21 and 13 BG soundalike who tutored Steve Allen for his Benny Goodman Story role (3,5)
- 23 The divine one
- 24 Not so Mad Max
- 25 See 18 down
- 26 Din made by bass playing Peter (anag)

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH.

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1 Fud Livingston; 8 Elvin Jones; 9 (Barbara) Lea; 10 (Baby) Dodds; 11 (Jimmy) Yancy; 14 Zoot Sims; 15 Art (Tatum); 16 Ornette Coleman; 20 Dan (Terry); 22 (John) Handy; 24 Neal (Hefti); 25 Chart; 26 (Jake) Hanna; 27 "Eik(s) Parade"; 29 (Bill) Russo; 30 (Bob) Shad; 31 (Johnny) Lytle
 DOWN: 1 Freddie Roach; 2 David Izenzon; 3 and 19 across Ian Carr; 4 Ivory (Joe Hunter); 5 (Freddie) Green; 6 (Tony) Oxley; 7 (Jimmy) Hamilton; 12 "Castle Rock"; 13 (Sonny) Salt; 15 Ahmad Jamal; 17 and 18 Charles Kynard; 21 (Blue) Note; 23 (Pepper) Adams; 26 Lol (Coxhill)



Compiled by Fred Dellar.

THE WRITE PLACE

MORGAN: A SUITABLE CASE FOR SCHIZOPHRENIA

I'VE JUST had the best laugh in years – read below.

"The Rajah. This to my ears ranks with albums like *Candy*, *Search for the New Land*, and *The Sidewinder* as one of Morgan's absolute best." (*The Wire*, June 1985)
 "The Rajah merits little discussion. Throughout this record Morgan in addition to being sour in pitch and fluffing handfuls of notes, is consistently boring. Why, why did Blue Note ever release this record? (One Star rating)" (*Downbeat*, August 1985)

Now I ask you! How can the jazz press (as a whole) ever gain (or regain) any sort of credibility when one can read two so completely contrasting and disparate reviews of the same LP?

There will always be differences of opinion and emphasis here and there in reviews, but how one can call an LP one of his "absolute best" and the other say it's a dog is beyond me. Jazz critics, Bah!

It only goes to reinforce what I've always thought – by all means listen to everyone, but make your own mind up.

Stewart J Tray, Manchester

It's this kind of cut-and-thrust debate that makes jazz criticism so great, isn't it? I think *The Rajah* is no great storm but not a total disaster – so there's a middle ground for you – cautious RC.

I.T.M.A.

THE TOMMY Chase Quartet is the most exciting band to come out of this country in the past 20 years. It seems to me that they will have to gain acceptance and recognition abroad before people like yourself realise just how great they are. The current British trait is to knock our home grown talent and sadly our loss will be the continent's gain. In my opinion there is no doubt of their international standing.

Michael V Rigby, SE13

RE-YOUR review of the new Tommy Chase album drive in your August issue.

Whilst your review is after all only one man's opinion (we all have them but are not all in a position to get them in print very often) it is your last paragraph that I find a little counterproductive. If Tom doesn't cool it perhaps the guys might become Messengers. They are a young band with great potential and are most certainly attracting a huge audience of people who don't care who went for coffee on that session in 1928 or it must be old because it was played last night. They just enjoy the music as music. Functional or otherwise.

I'm glad to hear you are not hostile to the facts and realities of what Tommy is striving to do – present a band that sounds like a band. Tubby Hayes always did this whether Quartet, Quintet or big band – and how well his music

is still loved both sides of the Atlantic.

Having had a couple of long chats with Tommy purely about music I don't doubt his sincerity and find our meetings full of great humour and passion. Tommy's got balls.

Ernie Garside, Dukinfield

IT'S CLEAR to this reader that your review of *Drive* in the August issue served more as a vehicle to pass glib and disparaging remarks about Tommy Chase's music as a whole.

I take it that you felt that your opinion – however much in the minority – had to be heard, so as to counteract Mark Webster's welcome article in the same issue. (An example, if there ever was one, of that "meanness of spirit that has made us all fatigued")

Mind you, while on the subject of your "Editor's Idea", your statement that, "the time for relaxing and running away from it [this music], is gone", really lost me.

What's it all mean Dick? IF ANYTHING.

Peter Parmigiani, WC1

It means that Tommy Chase has got more mentions in this magazine and probably more attention than I'd bought 20,000 copies of *Drive* and distributed them among the world's jazz cognoscenti (whoever they are). Keep it up Tom! – RC.

NEW, IMPROVED, GUARANTEED ETC

I DETECT terrible/terrifying vibrations in the atmosphere regarding your publication.

For the listening/buying population, this magazine has had the opportunity to provide information on all the established and new music formats that receive less overt media coverage. Both UK and overseas subscribers need to be made aware of the new music arising from Britain and Europe in particular. Other, more readily available publications are either incapable or dogmatically unwilling to cover these genres. However, I can only envisage a more popularised format slowly surfacing within the next 6–12 months. Which will result in less research and interviews with the more adventurous musicians and less reviews or at least ratings of recordings by these people.

Musicians and listeners alike will be equally distressed should the original intentions of *The Wire* be severed.

M. Bender NWS

Not so terrible! I can see how phrases on *Boyd Rice*, *Almeida Festival*, *Jayne Cortez* and their multifarious ilk can be construed as much of a sell-out. And covering someone like Sonny Rollins and deeming that "populised" is like saying Shakespeare's getting too darn ubiquitous these days. Whatever gets *The Wire*'s coverage, we aim that treatment to be fresh and non-derivative. Whether your taste has one musician down as more "adventurous" than another, our analysis is always (I hope) going to be a different

perspective from what you'd get elsewhere. Give us a break, huh? – RC.

THE LIFE OF THE RARE BIRD REICHEL

APPENDIX TO the Magic Touch feature and record review of guitarist Stanley J. in August *Wire*.

I can't buy and listen to all those records just for the sake of research-comparing eg. guitar-playing methods; but whoever wants to know who created what first might find it interesting to listen also to HANS REICHEL from West Germany. Not only an (other) innovator of "Hammering On" but also inventor and builder of the 'night' guitars for his way. The development of his playing-his-method, his sound, and his work as an improvising musician has, since 1973, been documented on several FMP records (Free Music Production Berlin – No's 150, 280, 400, 640, 830 and 85, most of them solo)

Not that the young man on Blue Note should know, but you should...

Paul Lovens, Genova

We do, Paul! Herr Reichel's marvelous guitarism can also be heard on the old Caroline compilation *Guitar Solos 2* along with Frith, Bailey and Fitzgerald. And when can we expect a new LP from yourself? – RC.

OUTLOOK SONNY

THERE ARE two factual errors in Stuart Nicholson's otherwise excellent review of Sonny Rollins' superb *Saxophone Colossus*. Firstly, "Kids Know" was never part of *Saxophone Colossus* – it was always in *Rollins Plays for Bird*, which was originally Prestige 7095. Secondly, "St Thomas" is not a Rollins original – it is a traditional tune entitled "Fire Down There" which comes from St Thomas in the Virgin Islands. (Its history probably goes back even further to being an English sea shanty.)

It is about time this latter point was clarified once and for all. I have already appeared in print on it – but if you do not believe me, then: (1) read Martin Williams notes to the second edition of *Saxophone Colossus* – "... Rollins' version of a traditional Caribbean calypso..."; or (2) listen to Randy Weston's 1955 recording of "Fire Down There" (traditional) on Riverside 12-203; or (3) talk to Dennis Charles or any other Virgin Islander. To say that Rollins wrote "St Thomas," is like saying Getz wrote "Deer Old Stockholm" or Coltrane wrote "Ole."

The real problem is the absurd application of copyright to jazz performances. Most good jazz improvisers transform maudlin banalities into musical masterpieces, yet only the composers of the maudlin banalities get composer royalties. Small wonder that jazz improvisers tend to get themselves registered as the composer whenever possible.

Martin Davidson, Sydney

IN NOVEMBER

CHET BAKER Reminiscing with Mr B
THE WEST COAST What went on out there – and
 why
PINSKI ZOO From Nottingham to Poland and back
 again
MICHAEL NYMAN We mean it – he'll be in this month
JAMAALADEEN TACUMA A bass, a haircut and a
 long name

THE WIRE – WHERE IT HAPPENS



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
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